

The Journal of Koheleth

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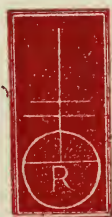
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THE JOURNAL OF
KOHELETH
BEING A REPRINT
OF THE BOOK OF
ECCLESIASTES
WITH AN ESSAY BY
ELBERT HUBBARD



THE ROYCROFT
PRINTING SHOP
MDCCCXCVI ❖ ❖ ❖

BCH/1896

THE JOURNAL OF
THE
SOCIETY OF
AMERICAN
HISTORIANS
PUBLISHED
BY THE
AMERICAN
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION
1921

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Sewall

Nov. 21, 1921

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J. Sewall

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Of this edition but seven hundred copies
were printed and the types distributed. Each
copy is numbered and signed, and this book
is number

147

Elbert Hubbard

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or name, written in a cursive script. The text is faint and appears to be "Handwritten text" or similar.

Acknowledgement is due my friend, Frederic W. Sanders, A. M., Ph. D., Fellow of Columbia University, for valuable assistance and suggestion in putting the matter in this book in its present form. E. H.

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THE STUDY.



IN the Book of Ecclesiastes, as in all other works of genius, we see strongly mirrored the human qualities of inconsistency and contradiction. The man is not writing for publication; he has no ambitious idea that he is writing for immortality. Forsooth! most authors are like farmers in a photograph gallery---very different persons from the awkward men in shirt-sleeves who so gracefully toss the golden sheaves over the cross-beams into the mow. In Shakespeare there is a careless quality which shows that of whatsoever he wrote he never blotted a line. And although we say with Ben Jonson, would he had blotted a thousand, the work lives and is deathless on account of its very imperfections. A lawyer's brief, a malefactor's defense, a shop-keeper's advertisement, may be perfect and complete, but their author's motives are ulterior, and, like all other selfish things that strive to clutch and hold, they are ephemeral and live the length of life of a moth. Only second

XVIII rate men have exalted aims. The great of earth simply endeavor to do their work, not to be great. They meet each problem of life as it presents itself, cheerfully, bravely, manfully, be the duty high or low. The great navigator dies in innocent ignorance of the fact that he has discovered a continent. Darwin loved Truth with a high and holy passion, and wot not as he wrote that he was working a revolution in the thought that had been many hundred years crystalizing. Had the author of *The Tempest* been told that his name would go thundering down the ages as the greatest literary name of all time he would have been staggered with incredulity.

And thus it has come about that a goodly portion of the world's great books are posthumous publications. Their authors either did not expect their words would be published to the world, or else they purposely provided that the work should not be issued until their hands could receive no royalty, their ears hear no applause and their eyes observe no menace. Add to these the books written behind prison bars by men who had neither hope of reward nor fear of censure, and we have no small per cent of the classics.

The ingenuous honesty of Ecclesiastes stamps the work as great literature. Men rarely confide their perplexities to the world.

They fear being misunderstood; they dread XIX
the accusation of weakness, and so assume a
swashing and martial outside: justifying
themselves in the position by the thought
that the good of humanity demands it. Yet
we deceive no one but ourselves—although
our example doubtless does make hypocrites
—for the manner put on for a specific intent
does not convince, and the book written with
anxious purpose is made from paper, and to
the paper mill it soon returns.

To me the Book of Ecclesiastes is simply
the Journal of a man who has lived long and
studied much; who has travelled and ob-
served and meditated; who has tasted of all
the so-called pleasures of life. And now he
has played the game to its limit, and, Old
Age plucking him by the sleeve, he recog-
nizes that he is about to quit. We catch him
off his guard and hear him talking aloud.

The old man's mind is in undress, not
criticising itself nor hampered by the con-
sciousness of having to submit to the criticism
of others. For, however easy and familiar
conversation or correspondence between
friends may be, there is usually something
of the play-actor entangled in it. No man
allows his thoughts to appear in dressing
gown and slippers, save with the wife of his
bosom, and she never tells his best, because

XX she can't translate it, even if she would. Conversation is comment and criticism on things external: very, very rarely does it rise to self-revelation or soul confession. Talleyrand was right: Words were invented that men might conceal their thoughts, and the purpose has never been forgotten. Just as the vital organs of the body are placed by Nature in a position where they cannot be trifled with, so we unconsciously guard the holy of holies against assault. The greatest egotist has his reticenses. It is only during the sessions of sweet silent thought that a man can summon his soul to judgment. Not even then is he always quite sincere or free from pose, for we view our acts as a passing procession, in which we proudly march, and even into the deepest seclusion we carry somewhat of this strange dualism of character. The average man plays to the gallery of his own self-esteem; but Koheleth, being more than an average man, may sometimes be dramatic, but he is never theatric.

Comedy and tragedy have the same source, differing only in degree or depending on one's point of view. A small lack of right adjustment causes laughter—a great one sobs and tears. Sympathy and accurate judgment form the base of humor, and we see that Koheleth appreciates that "there is a

time to laugh." A subtle touch of wit comes in now and again, and a gentle sarcasm plays its part in softening the sombreness of the whole. Thus again do we see the master mind; for as pure comedy does not satisfy, so the tragedy of life without its smiles is too concentrated for us to endure: its departure from truth too great for us to forgive. In the most intense scene of the most intense tragedy ever written, the tipsy porter appears just before the breaking strain is reached—we laugh and the play is saved. Laughter has a certain proportioned relation to tears, and unless this relativity is shown in literature the lines come tardy off. But the relationship must be easy and natural and glide lightly from one condition to another. These dual or multiple qualities mark the work of all strong men. XXI

A cheerful resignation is always heroic; but no phase of life is so pathetic as a forced optimism. A Mark Tapley is the most depressing of companions, and the man who hopes against hope is not only gradually sinking, but he is pulling others down with him. Hope pushed to the other side is only cowardice. In all riot of the senses, whether the agent be opium or religious zeal, the punishment is dire and relentless. For the man who believes in a heaven of perfect bliss also

XXII believes in a hell of abject torment ; so unless his heart be hopelessly seared, his peace is broken by the clank of an ever lengthening chain.

Or if, higher up the scale, his heaven be not a place but "a condition of complete harmony," gained by the denial of the existence of matter, there is still the belief in a perdition of discord for those who think otherwise, and the result is a smooth and ironed complacency bereft of pity, that is fatal to all advancement. The ostrich's plan of disposing of difficulties is not without its disadvantages.

Then there is a sort of skyey metaphysics that is unlike charity, being exceedingly puffed up. It always has an answer ready. It claps its calipers to science, art or philosophy without warning, and reasons high : finding meanings, portents, proofs where'er it lists. Whatever is not in accordance with its preconceived predilections is boldly argued down, or calmly waived, or smiled away. Through its nimble alchemy it extracts sunbeams from cucumbers, or resolves the gold of experience into vapour by the breath of its mouth. Pressed too closely, like the ink-fish, it clouds its slippery form in misty, meaningless words. Beware of these mazy, hazy, hotly arguing philosophers who twist

and distort all the beautiful things of earth XXIII
into "proof." They love not Truth ; they
only pander to a Sect.

And knowing these things, down deep in
our hearts, we crown with laurel the literature
that contains the honest doubt. Hamlet is
a vast interrogation point ; Faust is a guess ;
the Divine Comedy a dream ; and Abt Vogler,
alb-clad, amice-tired and stoled with the
sacred tippet, is carried on the wings
of music free and clear of all
the ensnaring fixity
of faith.





SCORE or more of learned men have written at appalling length concerning the Book of Ecclesiastes, and various violent efforts have been made to show a consistent continuity in the thought. Indeed, the most flagrant fault of the theologians has ever been an attempt to get more out of literature than there is in it. Thus one man with ingenious argument proves the book to be a dialogue, and the contradictory character of the text is accounted for by the hypothesis that two men are talking. The inventor of this suggestion seemingly being all forgetful of the fact that man is a dual creature and asks himself questions all day long. A learned Bishop in the Seventeenth Century published a lengthy treatise proving that originally the book was written on very small pages; and in a high wind these leaves were carried out of the window and then collected haphazard and "copied by a woman or foolish person." Others still have held that it is the mere babbling of a demented old man; defeated in his life's aspirations, discouraged and waiting for death, he recalls but snatches of the wisdom that once animated him. Still another school holds to the belief that the work is a symposium.

But one thing is plain, and that is that the

lines giving the authorship to the son of **XXV**
David are an interpolation by some one pos-
sessed of the popular belief that "Solomon
was the wisest man that ever was," and
therefore more likely to have written the
book than any one else. Nor is the plan
of attaching the names of famous
men to the work of obscure
authors wholly with-
out precedent.





ANON COOK calls our attention to the fact that the much discussed first verse does not affirm that Solomon was the writer; it merely says "the son of David," and thus the actual author is relieved from the accusation that he is telling a falsehood: a bit of pious evasion that surely merits our admiration.

To meet the objection that the work contains forms that are purely Aramaic or Chaldean and therefore unknown to Solomon, a writer in Smith's Bible Dictionary says that such knowledge probably was obtained by Solomon from his "strange wives." And this writer, who possesses an acumen quite beyond the average biblical student, naively suggests that the vast extent of Solomon's wisdom is only to be accounted for by taking into account that he was much married. It is very true that Solomon had many wives and that in his household there were women "from all the nations 'round about." In fact, whenever Solomon heard of a beautiful and highly intelligent woman he sent for her and she was brought to the court and legally married to him. That the great wisdom of Solomon was derived from his wives is inferred by Smith on the assumption that a newly wedded woman will always tell her husband everything she knows. The learned

Dr. Pusey also seems to hold to this view. XXVII

But the man who wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes had not been benefitted by women. There are, and always have been, as many good women on earth as good men, but the kind Koheleth knew were the wrong sort. Men judge women by those with whom they have been intimate. Koheleth is a man with a "past," but a limited past, and his experience with women has stranded his faith in femininity: "One man among a thousand have I found, but a woman among all those have I not found." Long years before some chit of a maid played battledore with his heart and he cannot forget it. How pitifully human! Small men understand women and are able to cope with caprice, but the guileless great fall an easy prey to the designing.

The absence of a Hebrew original caused the book to be excluded from the Jewish canon, but Preston avers that the first verse declares it was written by Solomon; and "if we reject the truth of this statement we doubt the literal accuracy of Scripture, and this no man has a right to do." To this Smith files a rejoinder to the effect that men are only inspired once in a while, and although Solomon did write the book it was in one of his "off" periods.



HE Book of Ecclesiastes, in point of philosophic insight and literary quality, is by far the most valuable book of the Bible. In these thoughts of the Prophet there is mingled an undefinable element of the writer's

personality: the strong, well-poised independence of the man who is convinced of his kinship with the Divine: of one who, feeling his footsteps mortised and tenoned in granite, knows the amplitude of time. He does not strive to be explicit, to make his philosophy synthetic, to convert or to proselyte. As in all sublime oratory there is a dash of indifference to the opinions of the audience, so in great literature there is a quality that says with Browning, "I do not write for you." And thus we behold that egotism which is the soul of Art.





ENDELSOHN says, XXIX

"The Wise Men sought to secrete the book Koheleth because they found in it words tending to heresy;" but later the Wise Men bring in a report that "on closer examination we have discovered a meaning in it." But it was provided that no man under thirty years of age should be allowed to read it. Between the schools of Shammai and Hillel a bitter controversy arose as to whether the book was inspired or not, and a running fight has been continued down the centuries on the same question. Even in our day men have arisen who deny its inspiration.

But it seems to me that if we
admit that "inspiration"
exists at all we must
accord it here.





OUR highest civilization to-day may be likened to a river made by the uniting of two streams: the Grecian and the Judaic. That which is antique in life and letters is Mediæval; that which is modern is pre-Christian. The philosophy of Koheleth is Greek overcast with the sombreness of the Hebrew. A consensus of the best scholarship seems to agree that the unknown author was a Jew who lived about the second century before Christ; a Jew who had drunk deep at the Pierian Spring, and who was no longer an Israelite.

For at the last no man who does his own thinking is an "ite." Outwardly he may subscribe to this creed or that, and if he be very discreet he may make his language conform, but inwardly his belief is never pigeon-holed, nor is his soul labeled. In theology the great man recoils at thought of an exact geometrical theorem, for he knows its vanity; and all algebraic formulæ in our sublime moments are cast away.

There will doubtless be a certain general mental drift or tendency in a thinker, but until one abandons his reason, and barter his birthright for a mess of assuring pottage, his belief is in a state of flux, and

sedimentation does not take place. It is a **XXXI**
low grade of intellect that expects
to corral truth in a "scheme"
or to hold it secure in
a "system."





KEAN STANLEY has beautifully said: "Ecclesiastes is an interchange of voices—higher and lower, mournful and joyful, hopeless and hopeful within a single human soul. * * *

Every speculation of the human heart is heard and expressed and recognized in turn." The sublime fantasies of thought continually baffle and perplex: the Prophet sends filament after filament swaying out into the darkness of the Unknown. Sometimes he thinks the thread catches and holds and that he is in communication with Another World, but the spell does not endure. For on the morrow the sun rises calm and resplendent and reveals the great enigma of the world anew, and though he listen ever so closely at the lips of the Sphinx yet she gives no answer to his questionings save the systole and dyastole of his throbbing heart.

The words of Koheleth have always held a fascination for every true lover of Letters. Perhaps it would be difficult to explain why the literature of Indifferentism holds its place against all inroads of that which is professedly purposeful. But one thing is sure, and that is that the sublime tragedy of Hamlet will never be replaced by any modern

melodrama with a domestic moral. The fate that catches the feet of the honest Dane in its relentless mesh is as cruel as that which puts a quietus to his guilty mother, or her partner in murder, the King. The contemplation of the hopeless fight, whether of Leonidas at Thermopylæ, Horatius at the Bridge, or Custer at the Lava Beds, does not sink us in despondency. Rather it gives us courage and, like the survivors of the Jeanette when they stood on the ice and saw the pennant on the main mast of their gallant ship swallowed in the crevasse, we pull our belts one hole tighter and give three cheers for the flag that surrenders only because it must.

Those prisoners of "Ninety-three" awaiting death in the Luxembourg were a merry lot. Without tears they kissed their companions who were about to be led away to the scaffold, and one of the men so soon to die said, "Be brave, comrades. I'll see God in an hour and tell him how things are mixed down here—he surely has forgotten you!" And does melancholy lure us because we unconsciously feel that we, like the prisoners of the Luxembourg, are awaiting a time when our loved ones shall be led away, or we from them, and that there is no hope of reprieve? Is it because we know that life is

XXXIV a tragedy and for us the fifth act of the play
will surely end in death? And do we laugh
because in our sanest moments we
know that death is as natural
as life and a deal
kinder?





QUOTE from the lips of a strong and gentle man : " To be born and to die is the record of existence to which all else is tributary. The pangs of birth and death thrill all the poet strains : only the tragedy that sweeps along the strings lives to echo in human hearts. It is the deathless minor chord that distinguishes the melody of true poetry from the dancing cadences of rhyme in all literature. The undertone is the soul in all song, in verse or in the unmeasured periods of epic prose."

XXXV





SOCIAL discontent is plainly set forth by Koheleth; it is the burden of much of his Journal. And in the iteration "that the profit of the earth is for all," that all wealth comes from "the field," that man is entitled to "the fruits of his labor," he voices a cry that is startlingly modern. Since history began men have held to the thought that "the former days were better than these." This old man two thousand years ago heard that sentiment expressed until he was weary. He denies it flatly. No one knows better than he that care rides on the crupper: it always has and ever will. He knows that there is no such thing as a "New Year;" it is only the old year come back.





THE burden of the Preacher's XXXVII

thought seems to be: We are unable to fully reconcile the events of life with any satisfactory theory of the government of the Universe. Let us be frank: For all we know this life is the sum of existence for us; there is no proof of a future life. True, we feel a certain confidence in Eternal Justice, and loving our friends we hope to meet them again after death. But God's ways are past finding out, and all we can do is to make the best of this condition that surrounds us. Whenever any good comes our way let us enjoy it to the fullest. It is better to be absolutely honest and admit that we do not know. Speak to-day what you think is true and contradict it all tomorrow if necessary. Of all things avoid excesses. "Be not righteous overmuch," he says, but recognize that a line of conduct that may be right under one condition may be evil when pushed on too far.





OUR author does not believe in iron bound rules of conduct. In several places he suggests the thought that common sense is a form of godliness, and that in the last analysis wisdom and virtue are synonymous; and that whatever is wise cannot but be good. He never loses his belief in the Universal Intelligence that governs the world. At times the light of his faith seems to be feeble, but the flame never dies. He dissents entirely from the stupid Jewish belief that material riches are the reward of righteousness, and he also sees clearly the patent fact that the best and purest souls often suffer most, while baseness and flaunting pride go free.





HIS he feels is an injustice — he cannot understand it. If God is just, why does he allow the weak to perish and misery to continue, or is even Elohim powerless in the matter? The pains of the world press upon him; and like many great and lofty souls he is thus robbed of the joyousness that otherwise might be his. Through the thought of the grief that others endure he suffers, a condition often referred to and recently emphasized best perhaps in the life of the illustrious Phillips Brooks. In this sombre intensity of feeling Koheleth shows the influence of his Jewish ancestry. He makes no claim of being one of the Lord's Anointed, and his sympathy is not centered in Israel; it embraces mankind. And it is this superior strength of moral

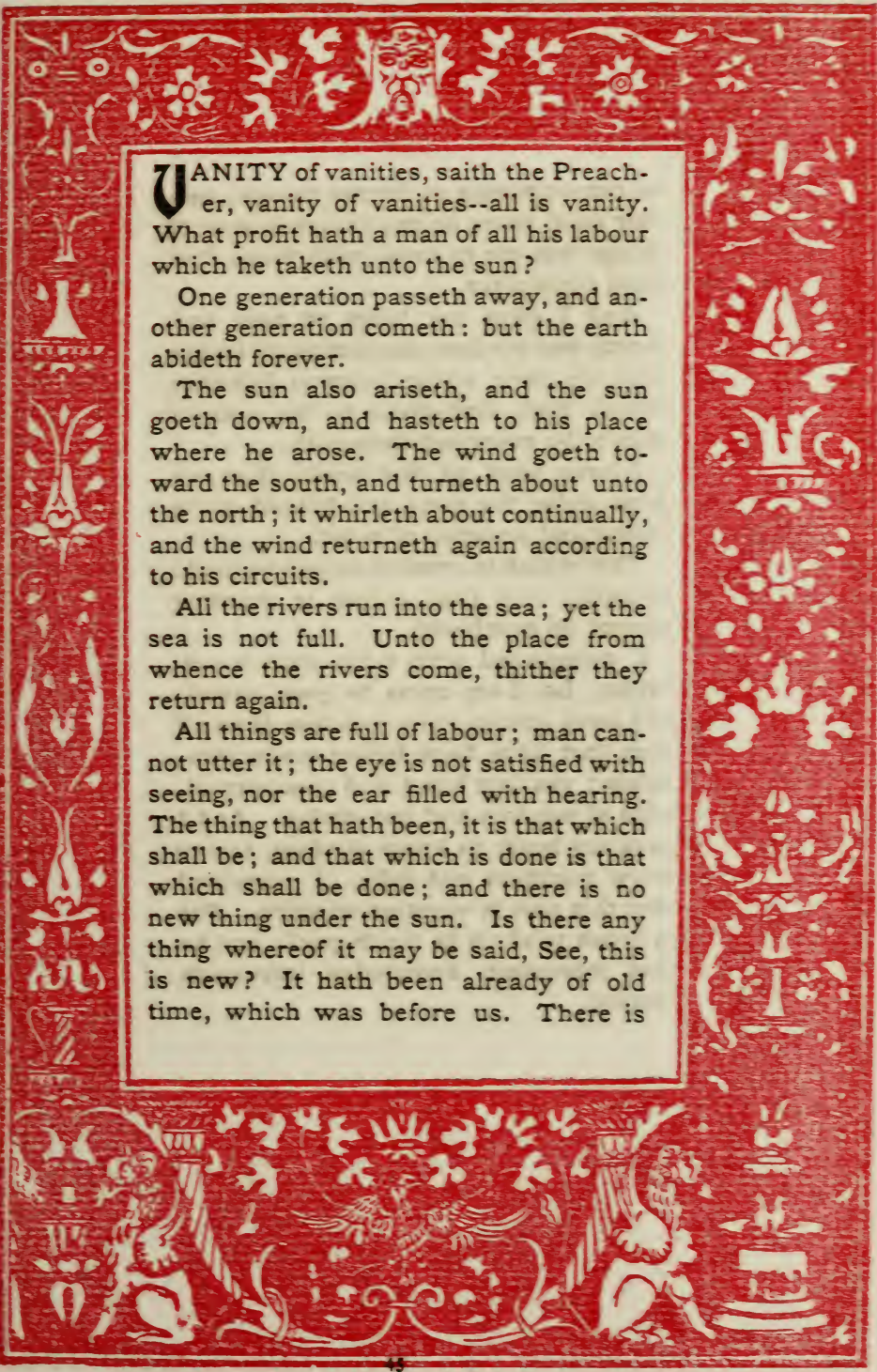
XL fibre combined with a directness of insight into existing conditions which, together with its wistful unswerving honesty, makes the book so valuable to us. The precepts of Koheleth are few and simple; they belong to the domain of Natural Religion:

Do the duty that lies nearest
you and leave the fu-
ture to God. Our
times are in
His hand.



SO HERE ENDETH THE STUDY
OF THE
JOURNAL OF KOHELETH.

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES,
OTHERWISE THE
JOURNAL OF KOHELETH.



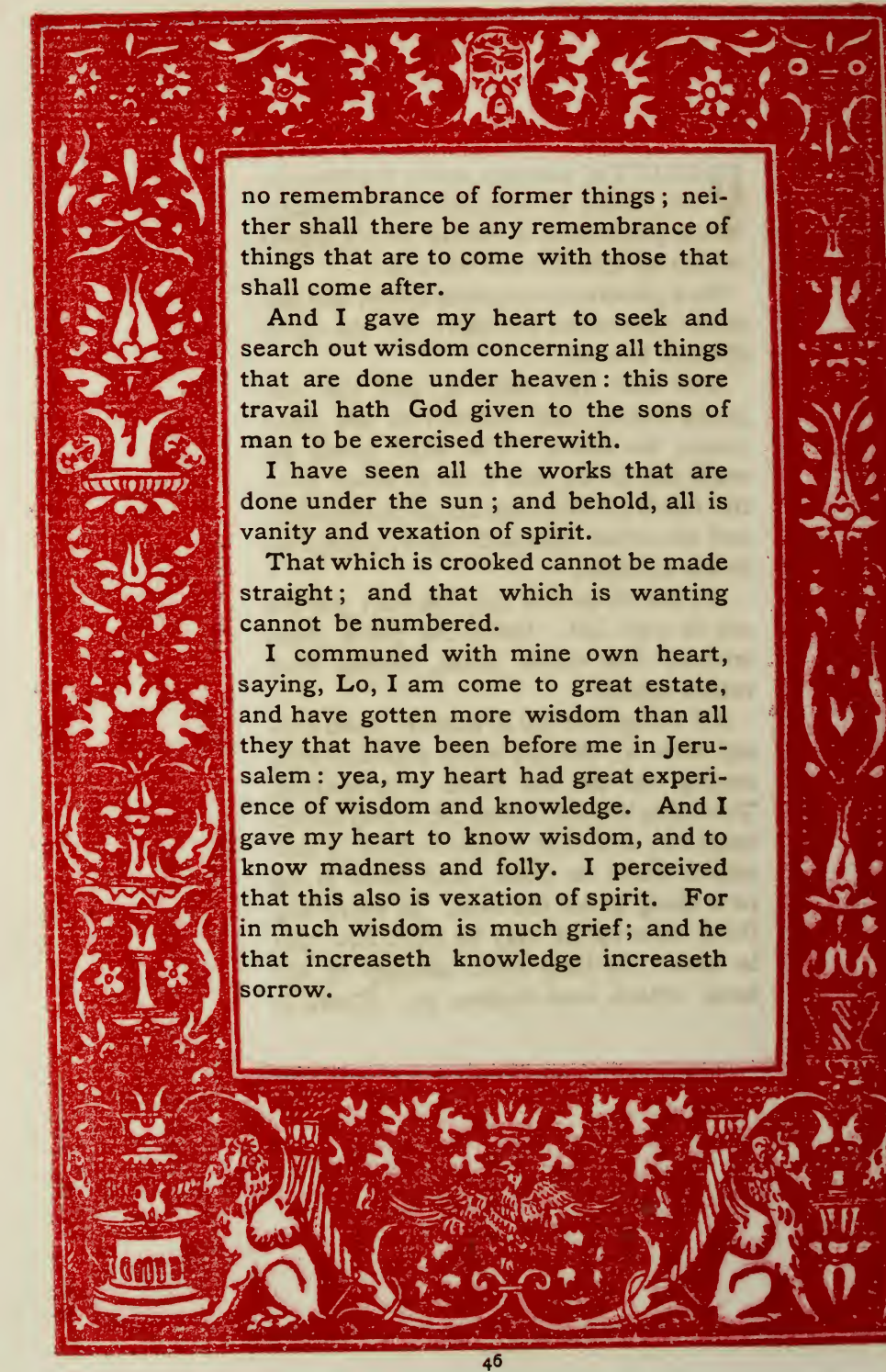
VANITY of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities--all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh unto the sun?

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever.

The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirlleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full. Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is



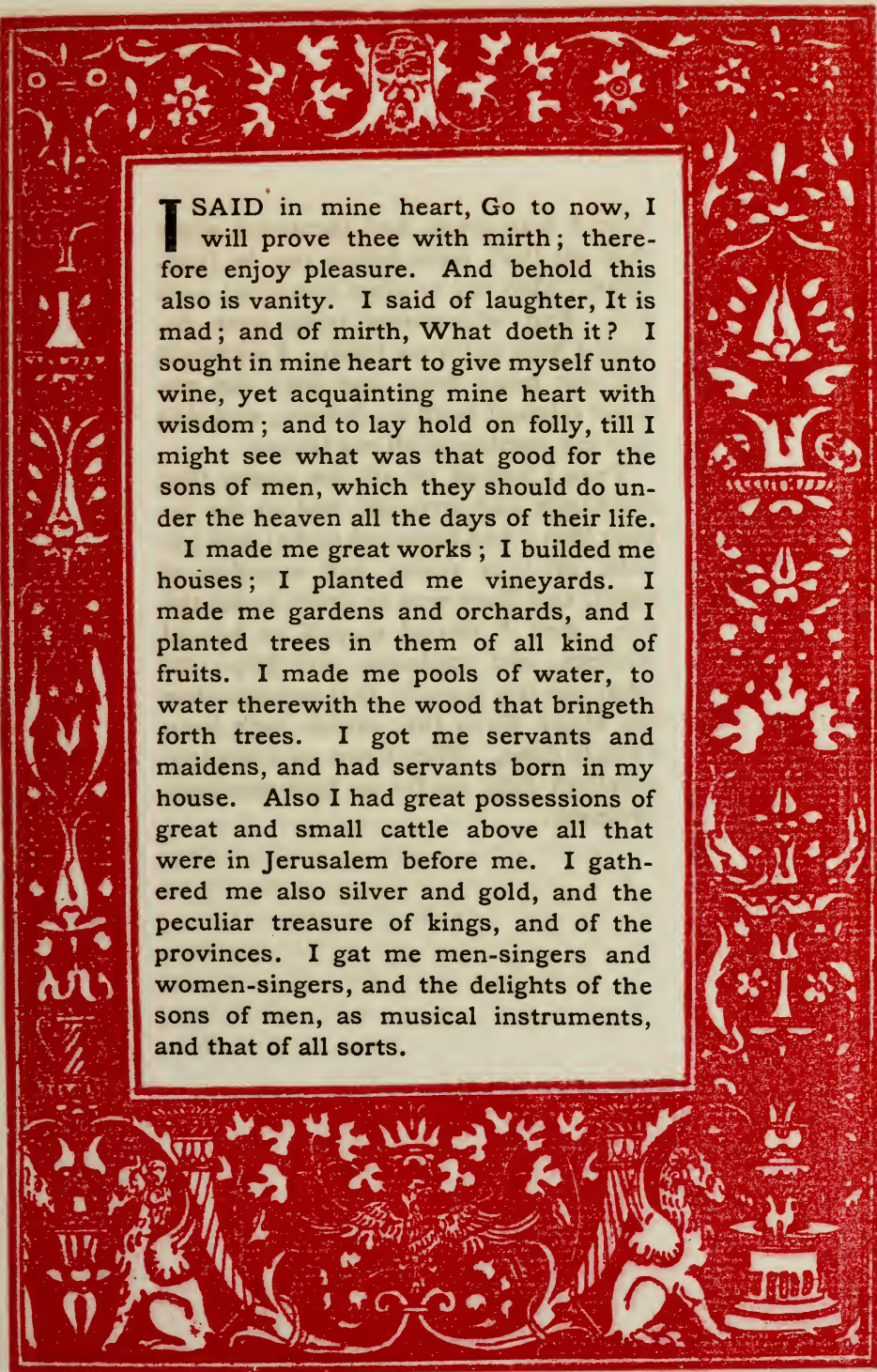
no remembrance of former things ; nei-
ther shall there be any remembrance of
things that are to come with those that
shall come after.

And I gave my heart to seek and
search out wisdom concerning all things
that are done under heaven : this sore
travail hath God given to the sons of
man to be exercised therewith.

I have seen all the works that are
done under the sun ; and behold, all is
vanity and vexation of spirit.

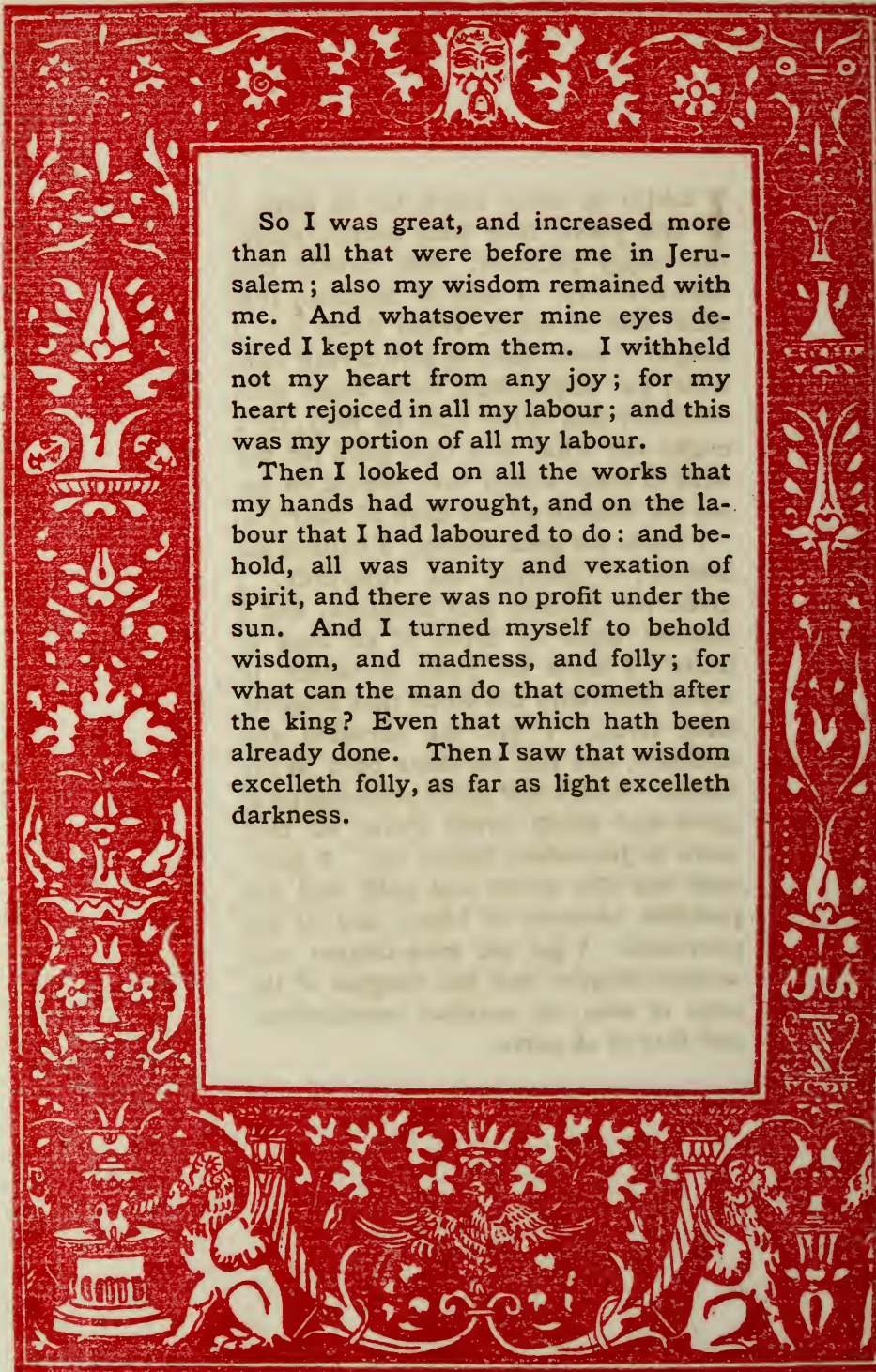
That which is crooked cannot be made
straight ; and that which is wanting
cannot be numbered.

I communed with mine own heart,
saying, Lo, I am come to great estate,
and have gotten more wisdom than all
they that have been before me in Jeru-
salem : yea, my heart had great experi-
ence of wisdom and knowledge. And I
gave my heart to know wisdom, and to
know madness and folly. I perceived
that this also is vexation of spirit. For
in much wisdom is much grief ; and he
that increaseth knowledge increaseth
sorrow.



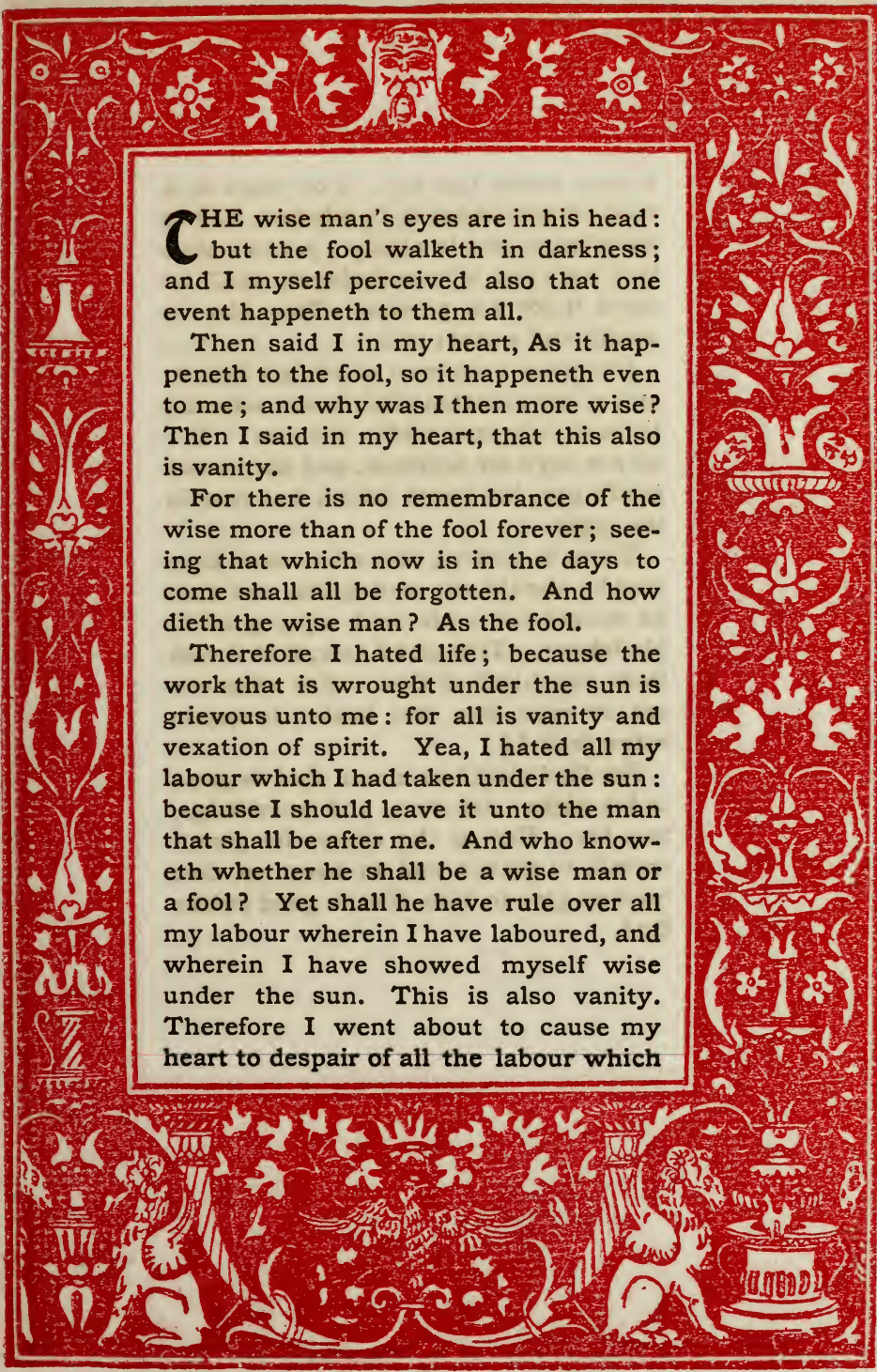
I SAID in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure. And behold this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it? I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.

I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards. I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits. I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees. I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house. Also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces. I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.



So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour; and this was my portion of all my labour.

Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun. And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly; for what can the man do that cometh after the king? Even that which hath been already done. Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

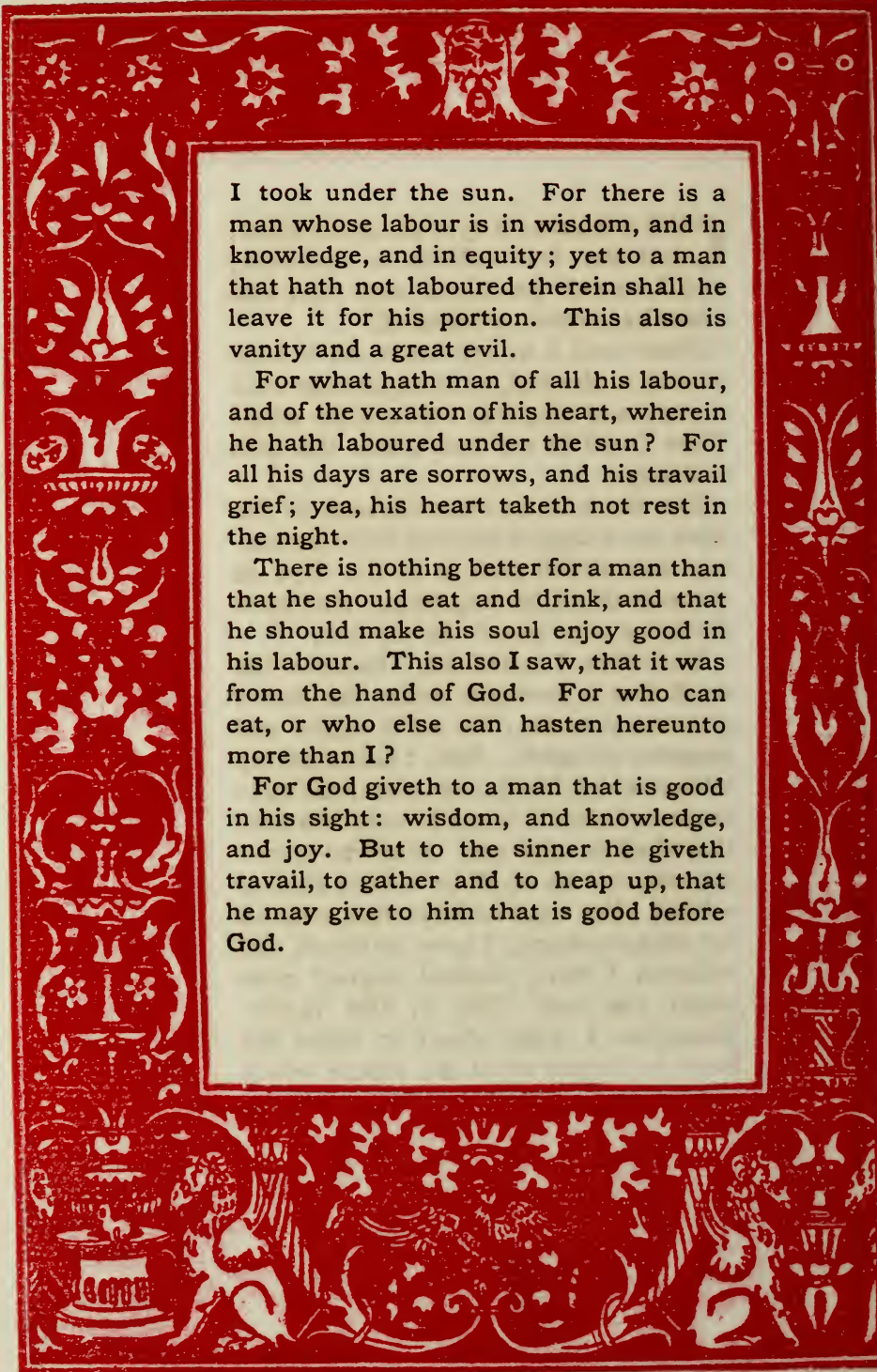


THE wise man's eyes are in his head :
but the fool walketh in darkness ;
and I myself perceived also that one
event happeneth to them all.

Then said I in my heart, As it hap-
peneth to the fool, so it happeneth even
to me ; and why was I then more wise ?
Then I said in my heart, that this also
is vanity.

For there is no remembrance of the
wise more than of the fool forever ; see-
ing that which now is in the days to
come shall all be forgotten. And how
dieth the wise man ? As the fool.

Therefore I hated life ; because the
work that is wrought under the sun is
grievous unto me : for all is vanity and
vexation of spirit. Yea, I hated all my
labour which I had taken under the sun :
because I should leave it unto the man
that shall be after me. And who know-
eth whether he shall be a wise man or
a fool ? Yet shall he have rule over all
my labour wherein I have laboured, and
wherein I have showed myself wise
under the sun. This is also vanity.
Therefore I went about to cause my
heart to despair of all the labour which

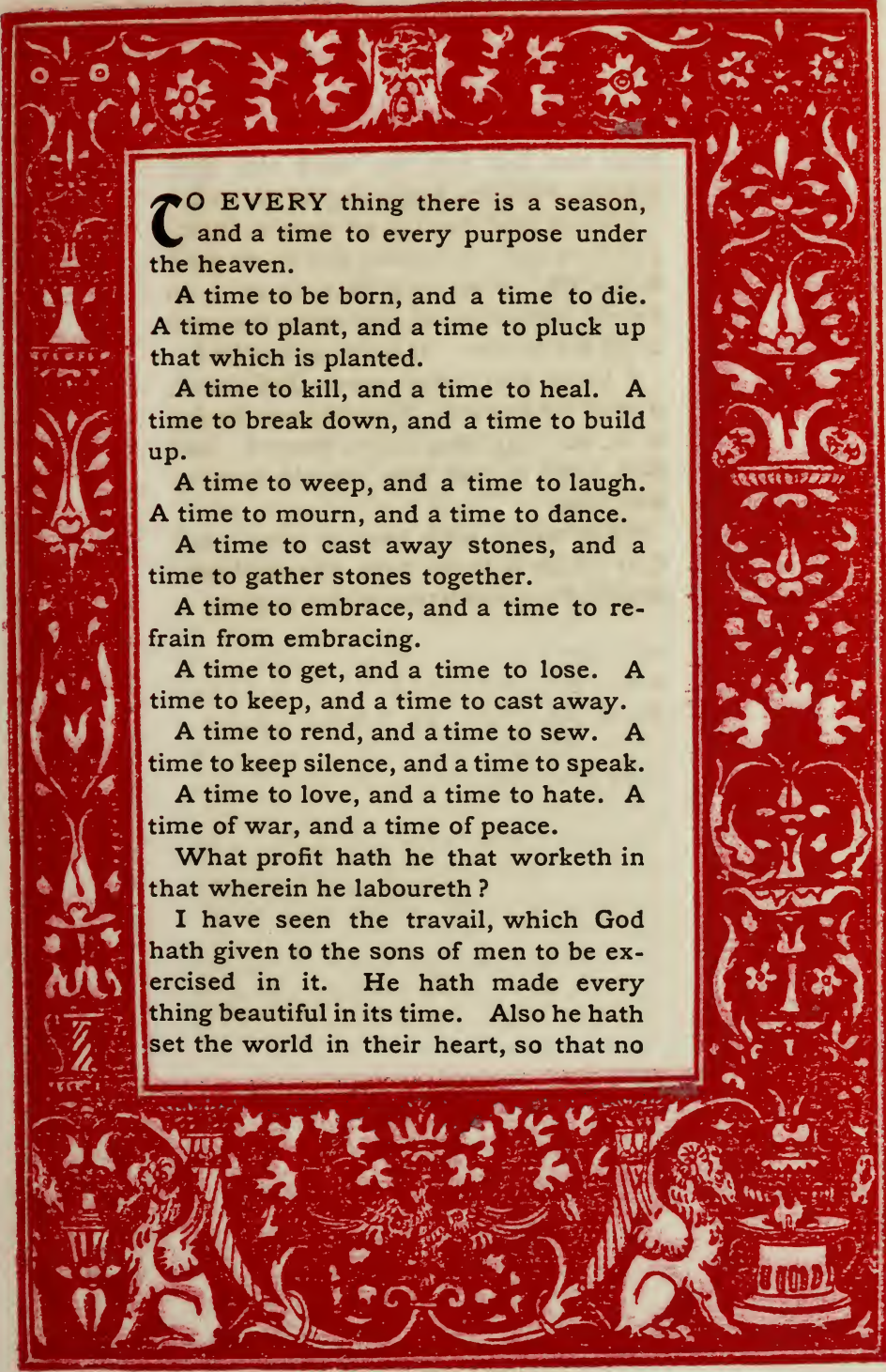


I took under the sun. For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil.

For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night.

There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God. For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto more than I?

For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight: wisdom, and knowledge, and joy. But to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God.



TO EVERY thing there is a season,
and a time to every purpose under
the heaven.

A time to be born, and a time to die.
A time to plant, and a time to pluck up
that which is planted.

A time to kill, and a time to heal. A
time to break down, and a time to build
up.

A time to weep, and a time to laugh.
A time to mourn, and a time to dance.

A time to cast away stones, and a
time to gather stones together.

A time to embrace, and a time to re-
frain from embracing.

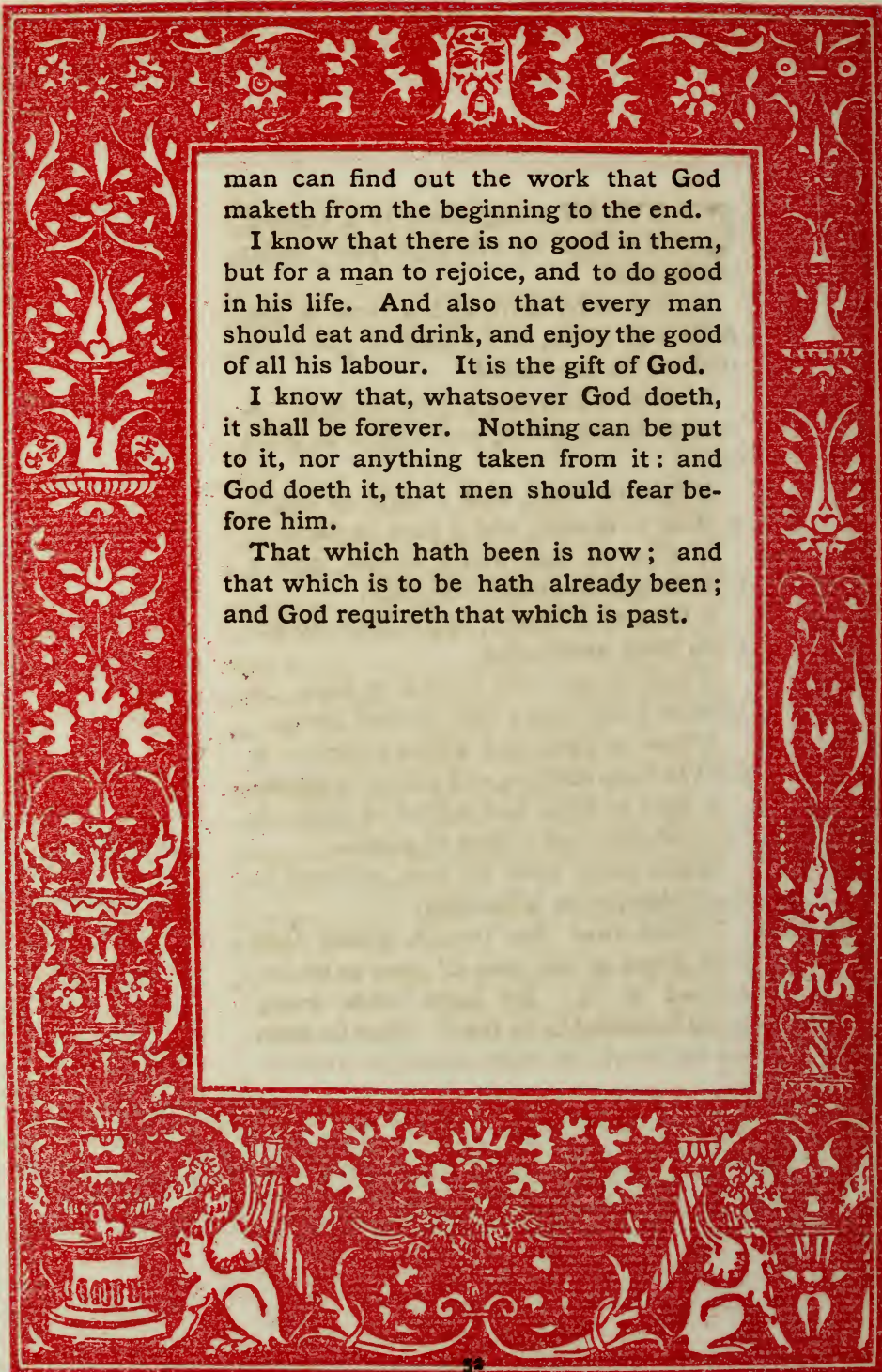
A time to get, and a time to lose. A
time to keep, and a time to cast away.

A time to rend, and a time to sew. A
time to keep silence, and a time to speak.

A time to love, and a time to hate. A
time of war, and a time of peace.

What profit hath he that worketh in
that wherein he laboureth ?

I have seen the travail, which God
hath given to the sons of men to be ex-
ercised in it. He hath made every
thing beautiful in its time. Also he hath
set the world in their heart, so that no

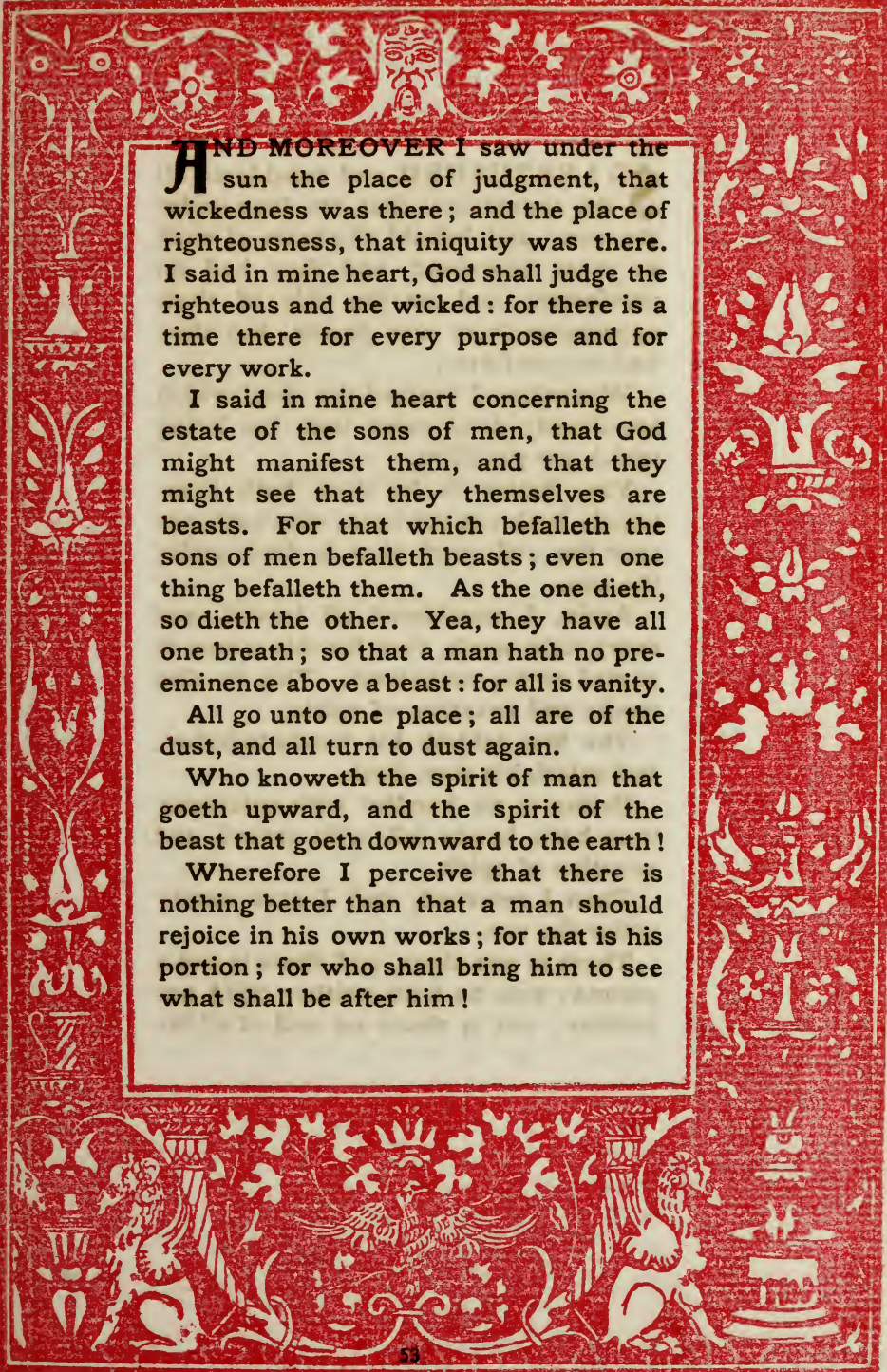


man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoyce, and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour. It is the gift of God.

I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever. Nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.



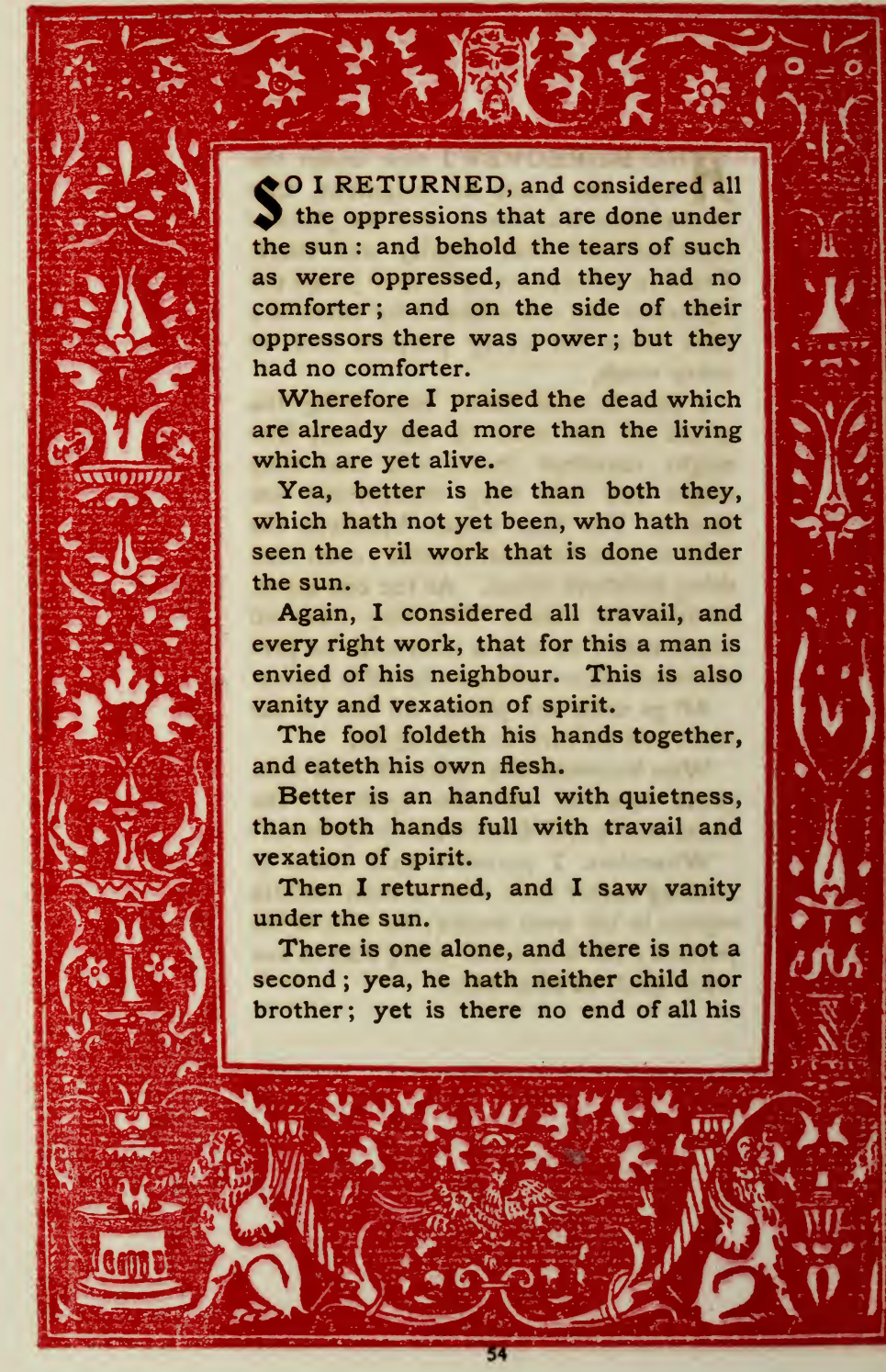
AND MOREOVER I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there. I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.

I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other. Yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity.

All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth!

Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion; for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him!



SO I RETURNED, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.

Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.

Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

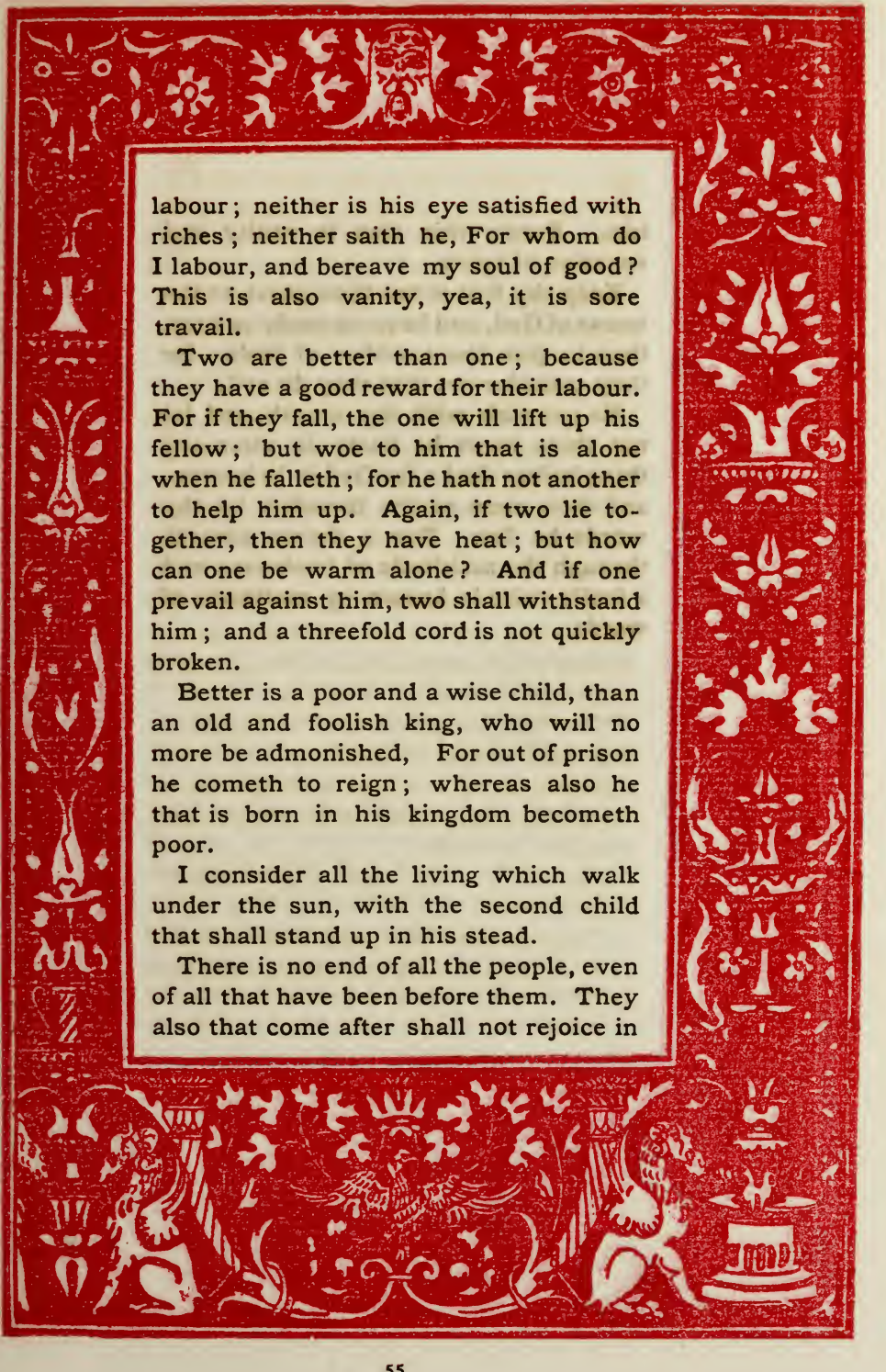
Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.

The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh.

Better is an handful with quietness, than both hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.

Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.

There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet is there no end of all his



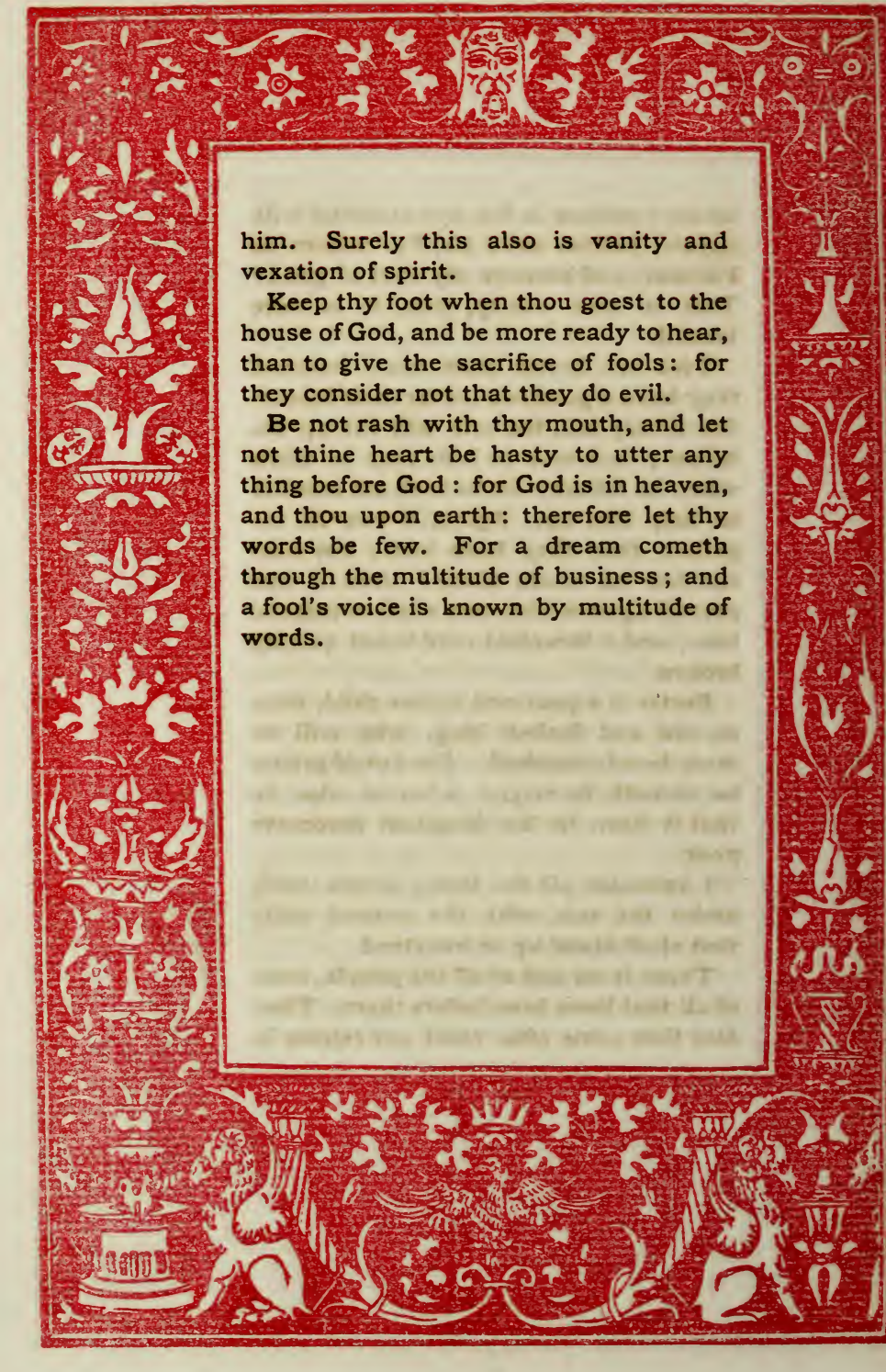
labour ; neither is his eye satisfied with riches ; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good ? This is also vanity, yea, it is sore travail.

Two are better than one ; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow ; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth ; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat ; but how can one be warm alone ? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him ; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Better is a poor and a wise child, than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished, For out of prison he cometh to reign ; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor.

I consider all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.

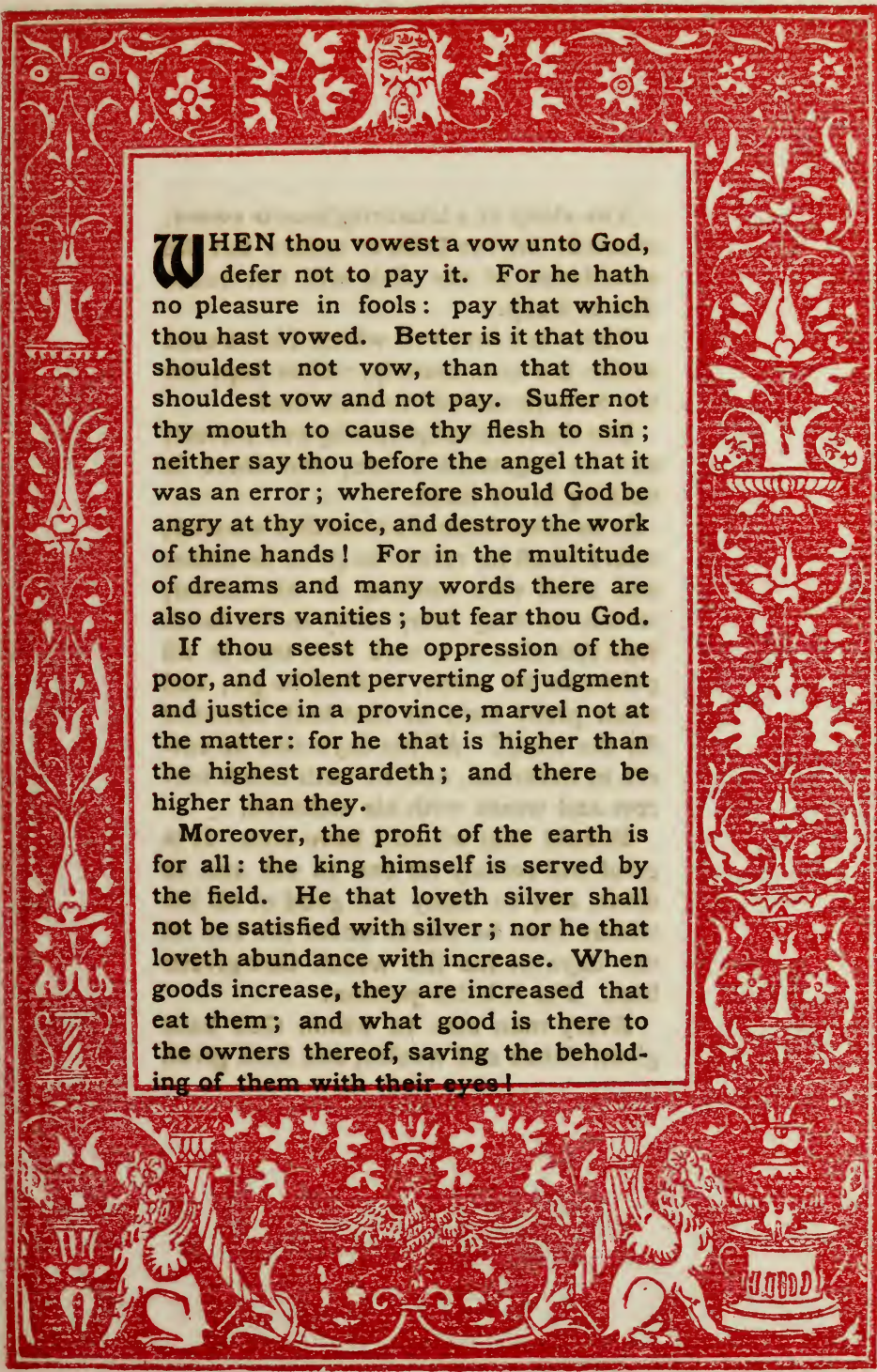
There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them. They also that come after shall not rejoice in



him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

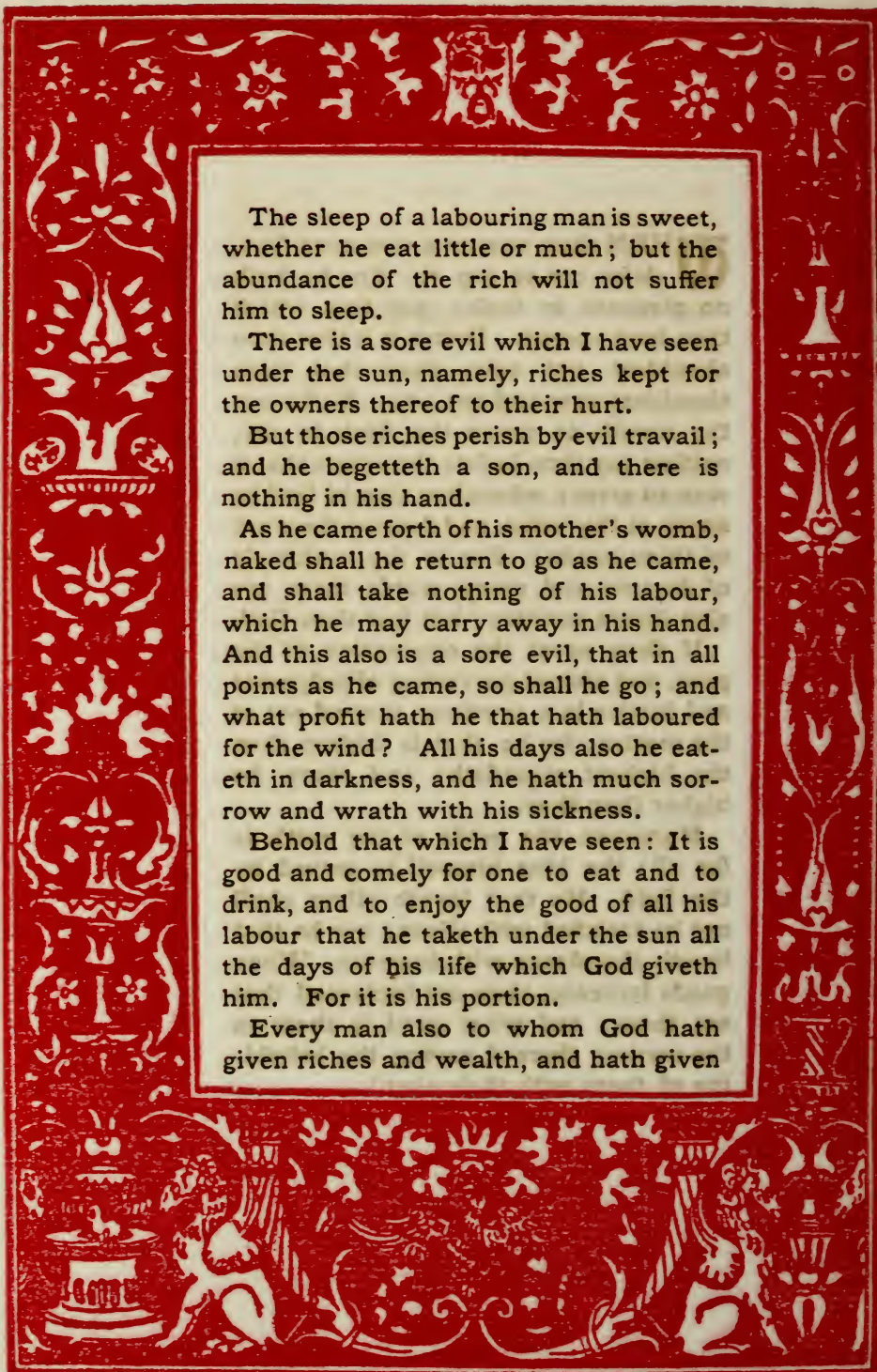
Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God : for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth : therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business ; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.



WHEN thou vowest a vow unto God,
defer not to pay it. For he hath
no pleasure in fools: pay that which
thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou
shouldest not vow, than that thou
shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not
thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin;
neither say thou before the angel that it
was an error; wherefore should God be
angry at thy voice, and destroy the work
of thine hands! For in the multitude
of dreams and many words there are
also divers vanities; but fear thou God.

If thou seest the oppression of the
poor, and violent perverting of judgment
and justice in a province, marvel not at
the matter: for he that is higher than
the highest regardeth; and there be
higher than they.

Moreover, the profit of the earth is
for all: the king himself is served by
the field. He that loveth silver shall
not be satisfied with silver; nor he that
loveth abundance with increase. When
goods increase, they are increased that
eat them; and what good is there to
the owners thereof, saving the behold-
ing of them with their eyes!



The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much ; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

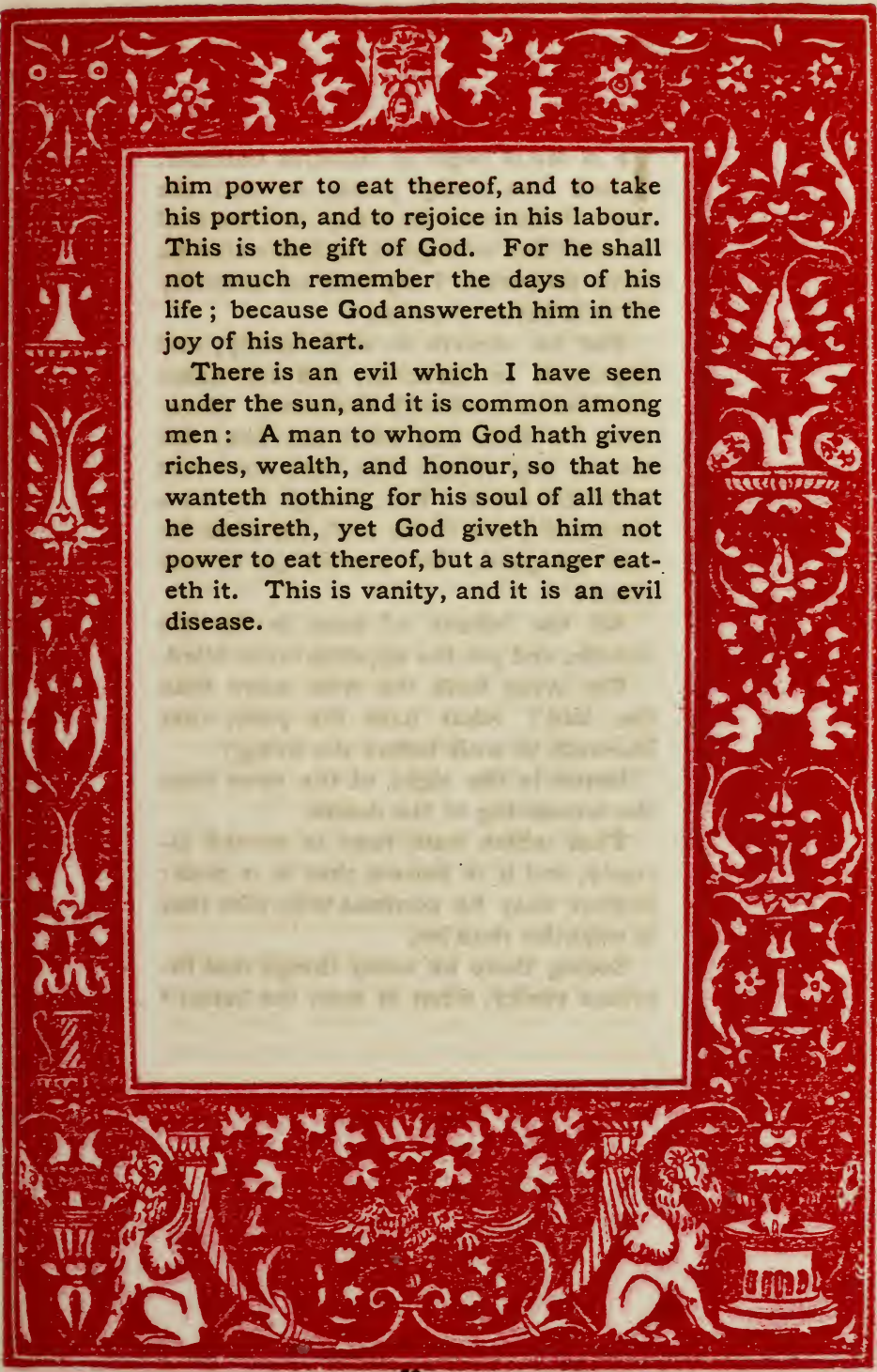
There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.

But those riches perish by evil travail ; and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand.

As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go ; and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind ? All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.

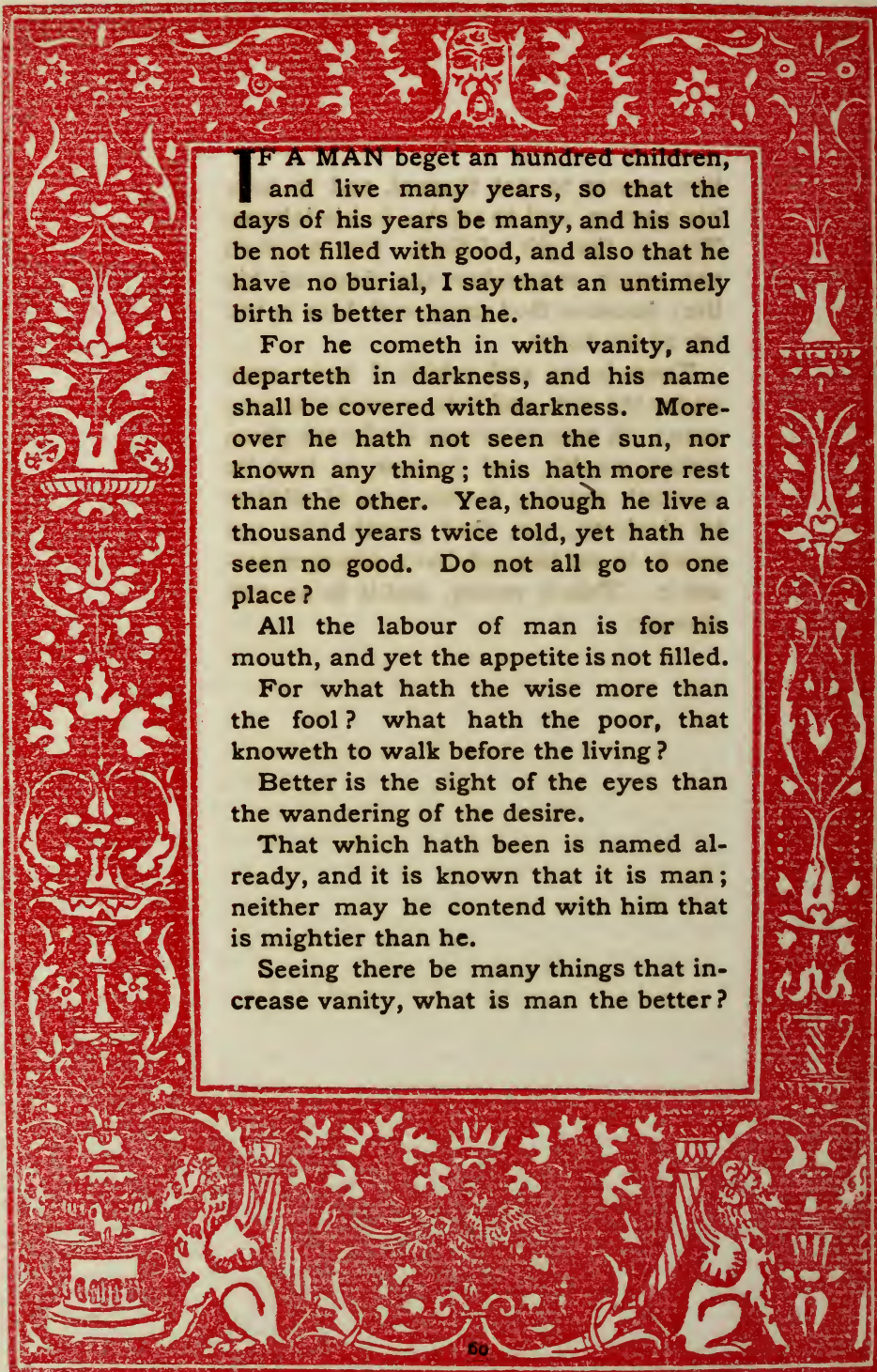
Behold that which I have seen : It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life which God giveth him. For it is his portion.

Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given



him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoyce in his labour. This is the gift of God. For he shall not much remember the days of his life ; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men : A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it. This is vanity, and it is an evil disease.



IF A MAN beget an hundred children,
and live many years, so that the
days of his years be many, and his soul
be not filled with good, and also that he
have no burial, I say that an untimely
birth is better than he.

For he cometh in with vanity, and
departeth in darkness, and his name
shall be covered with darkness. More-
over he hath not seen the sun, nor
known any thing; this hath more rest
than the other. Yea, though he live a
thousand years twice told, yet hath he
seen no good. Do not all go to one
place?

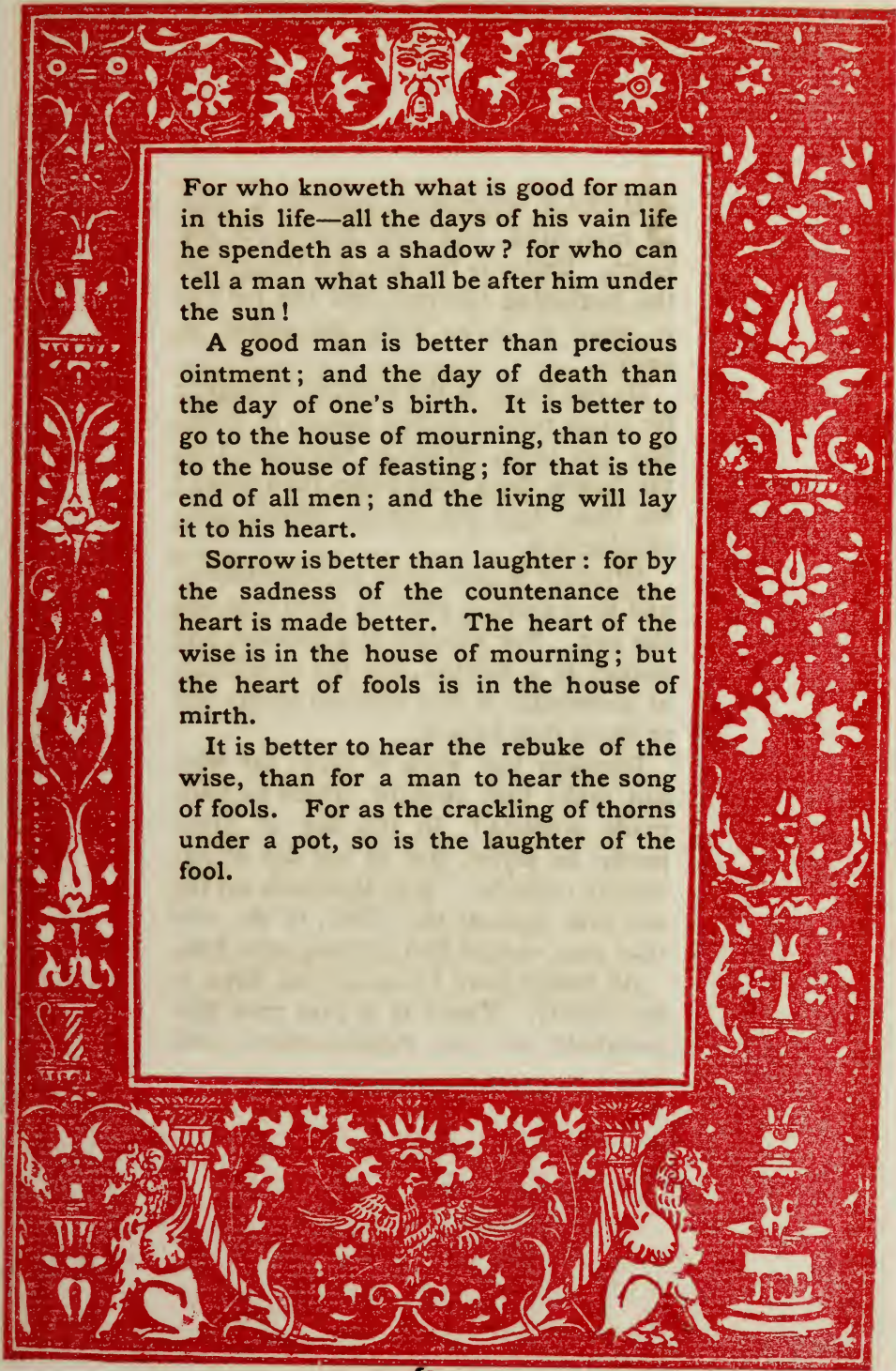
All the labour of man is for his
mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.

For what hath the wise more than
the fool? what hath the poor, that
knoweth to walk before the living?

Better is the sight of the eyes than
the wandering of the desire.

That which hath been is named al-
ready, and it is known that it is man;
neither may he contend with him that
is mightier than he.

Seeing there be many things that in-
crease vanity, what is man the better?

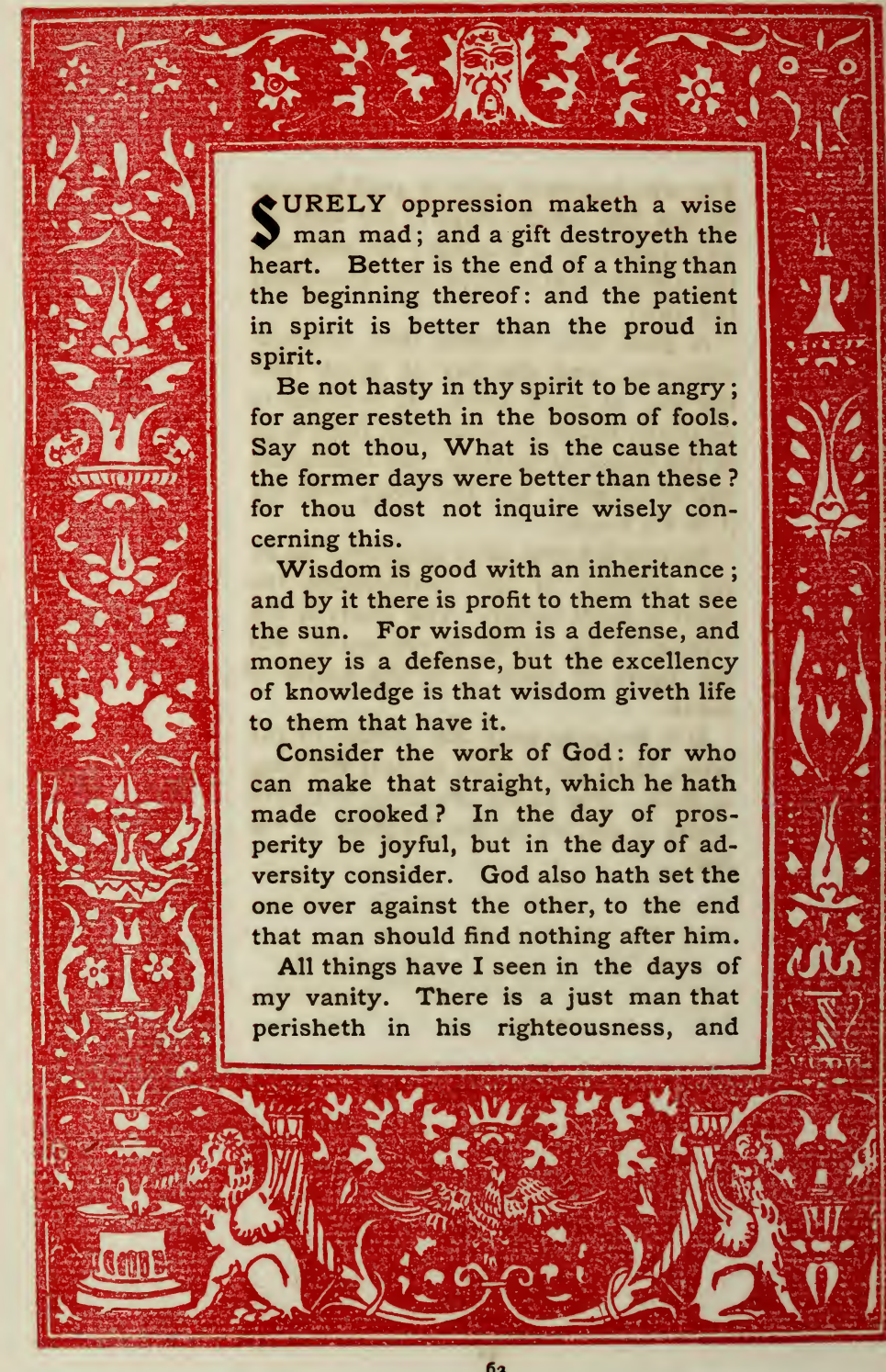


For who knoweth what is good for man in this life—all the days of his vain life he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun!

A good man is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.

Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.



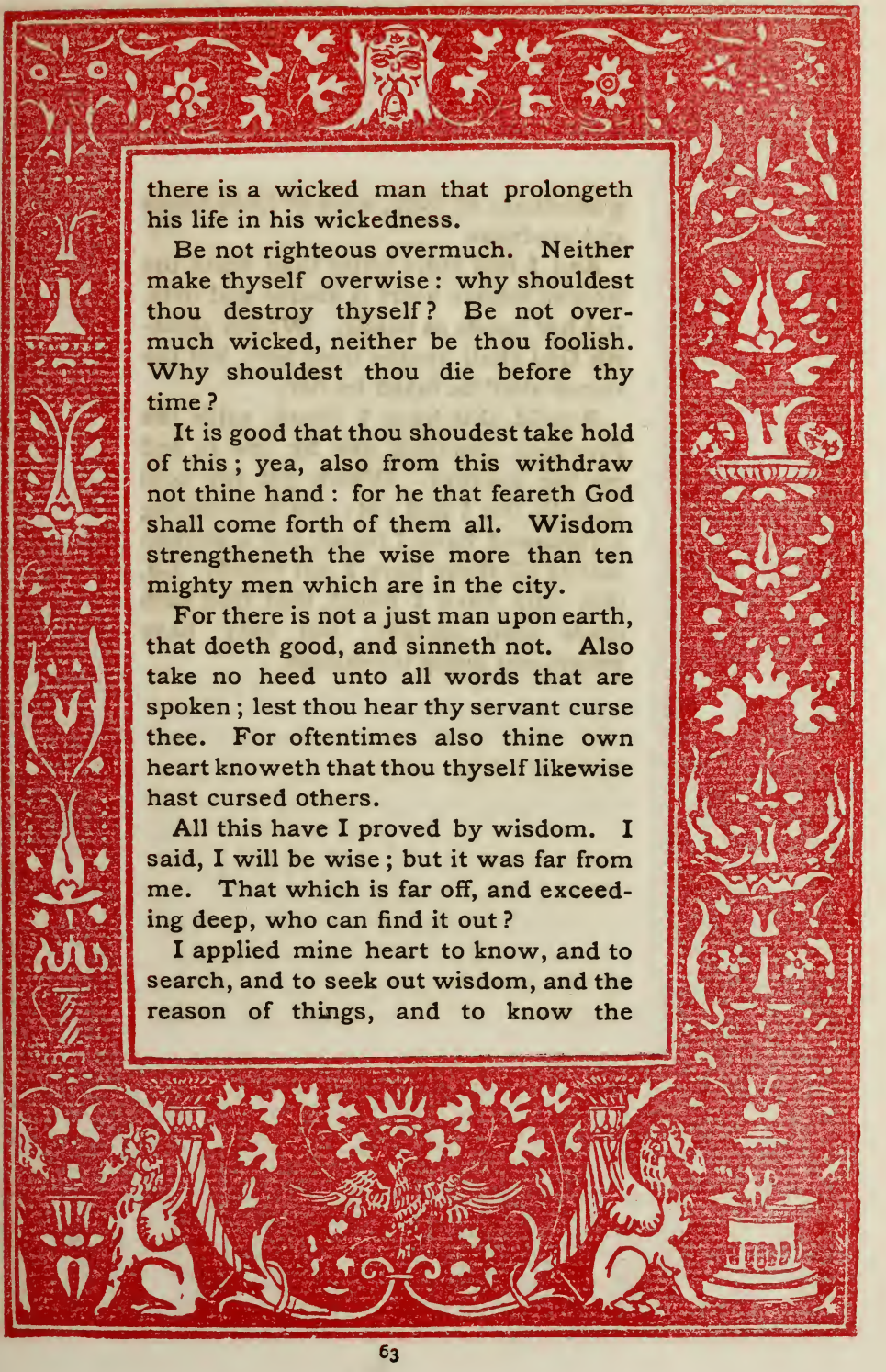
SURELY oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart. Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.

Wisdom is good with an inheritance; and by it there is profit to them that see the sun. For wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense, but the excellency of knowledge is that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider. God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.

All things have I seen in the days of my vanity. There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and



there is a wicked man that longeth
his life in his wickedness.

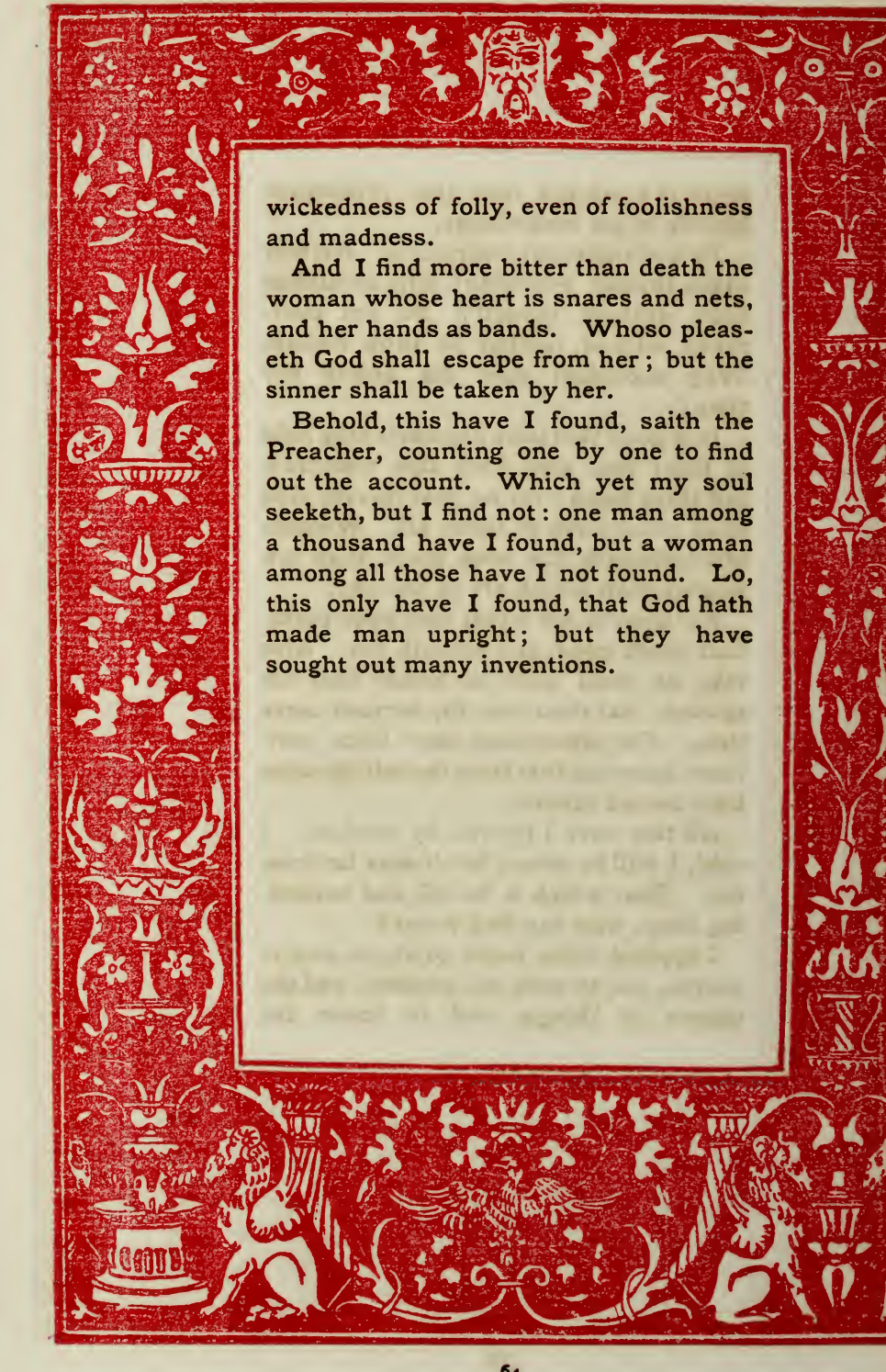
Be not righteous overmuch. Neither
make thyself overwise : why shouldest
thou destroy thyself ? Be not over-
much wicked, neither be thou foolish.
Why shouldest thou die before thy
time ?

It is good that thou shouldest take hold
of this ; yea, also from this withdraw
not thine hand : for he that feareth God
shall come forth of them all. Wisdom
strengtheneth the wise more than ten
mighty men which are in the city.

For there is not a just man upon earth,
that doeth good, and sinneth not. Also
take no heed unto all words that are
spoken ; lest thou hear thy servant curse
thee. For oftentimes also thine own
heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise
hast cursed others.

All this have I proved by wisdom. I
said, I will be wise ; but it was far from
me. That which is far off, and exceed-
ing deep, who can find it out ?

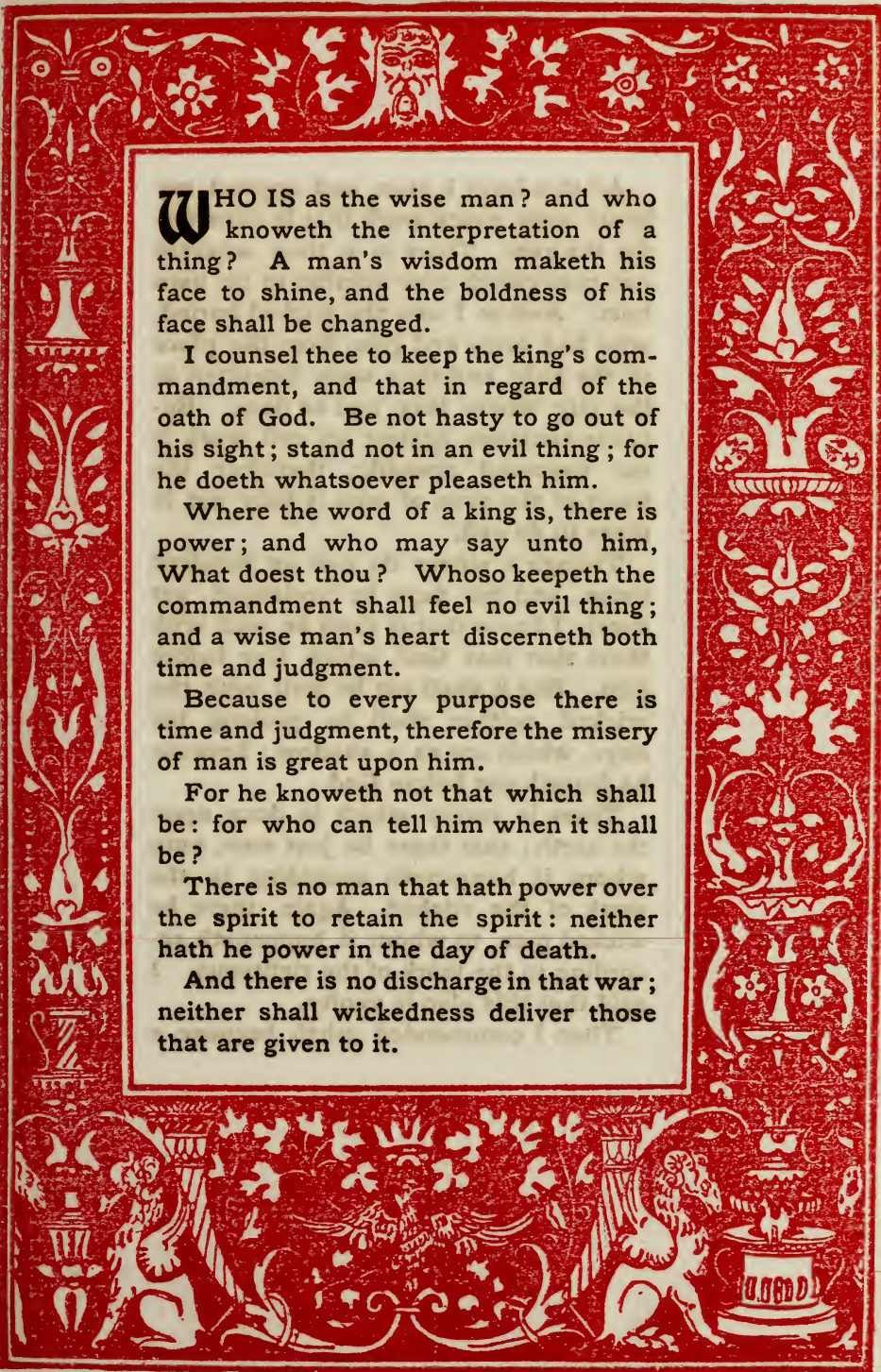
I applied mine heart to know, and to
search, and to seek out wisdom, and the
reason of things, and to know the



wickedness of folly, even of foolishness
and madness.

And I find more bitter than death the
woman whose heart is snares and nets,
and her hands as bands. Whoso pleas-
eth God shall escape from her ; but the
sinner shall be taken by her.

Behold, this have I found, saith the
Preacher, counting one by one to find
out the account. Which yet my soul
seeketh, but I find not : one man among
a thousand have I found, but a woman
among all those have I not found. Lo,
this only have I found, that God hath
made man upright ; but they have
sought out many inventions.



WHO IS as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed.

I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God. Be not hasty to go out of his sight; stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.

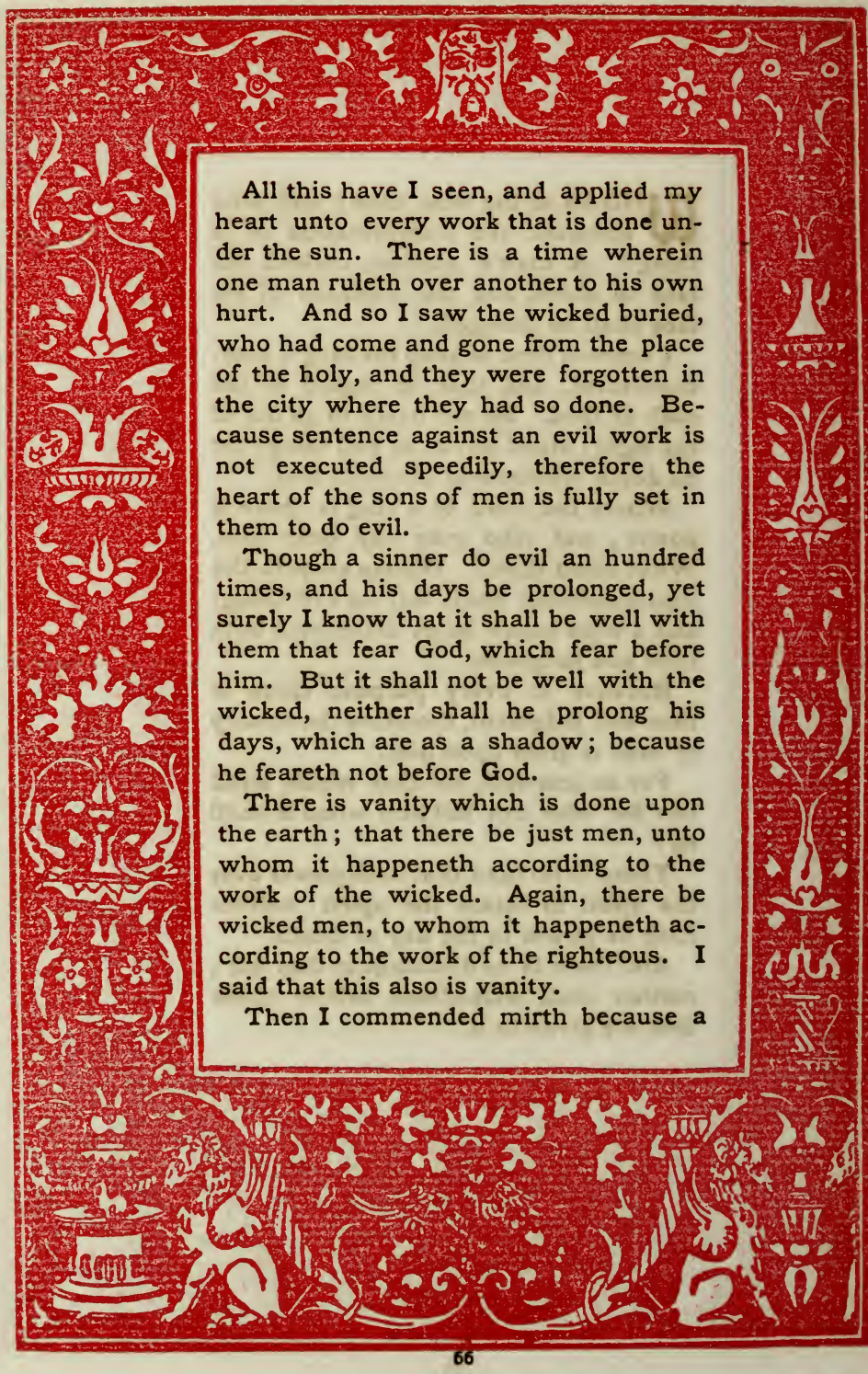
Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say unto him, What doest thou? Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.

Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.

For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?

There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit: neither hath he power in the day of death.

And there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

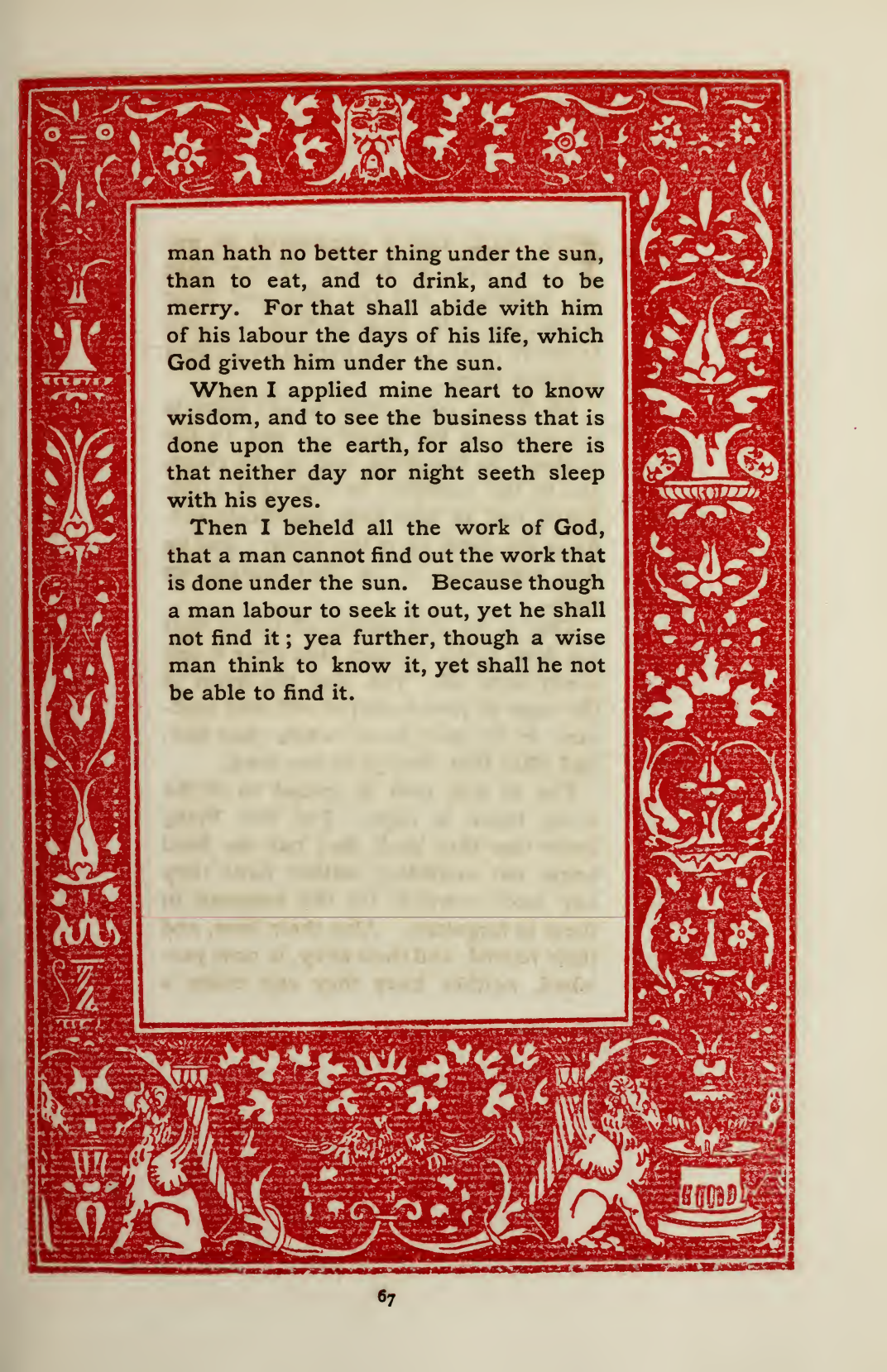


All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun. There is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt. And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him. But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.

There is vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked. Again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.

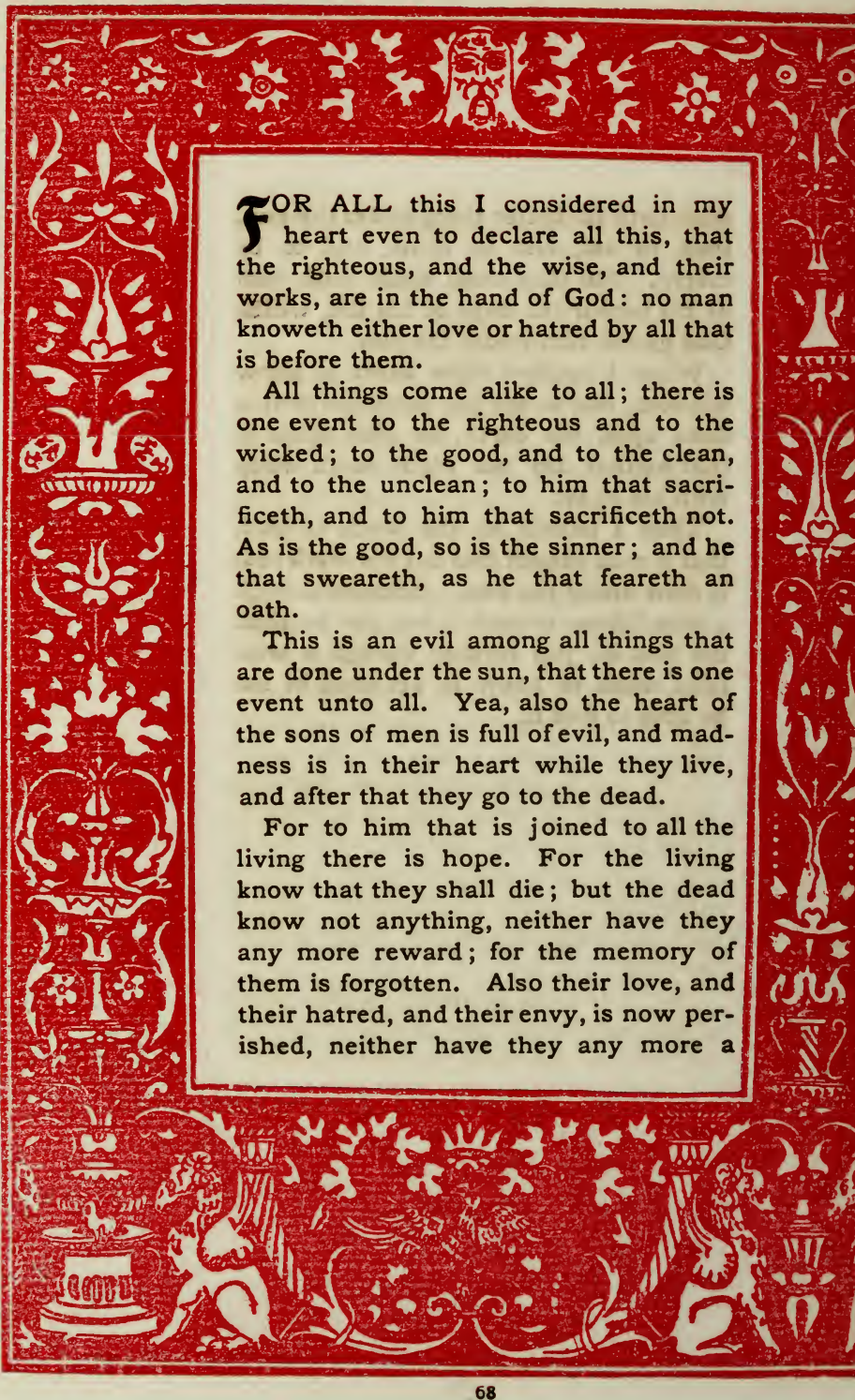
Then I commended mirth because a



man hath no better thing under the sun,
than to eat, and to drink, and to be
merry. For that shall abide with him
of his labour the days of his life, which
God giveth him under the sun.

When I applied mine heart to know
wisdom, and to see the business that is
done upon the earth, for also there is
that neither day nor night seeth sleep
with his eyes.

Then I beheld all the work of God,
that a man cannot find out the work that
is done under the sun. Because though
a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall
not find it; yea further, though a wise
man think to know it, yet shall he not
be able to find it.

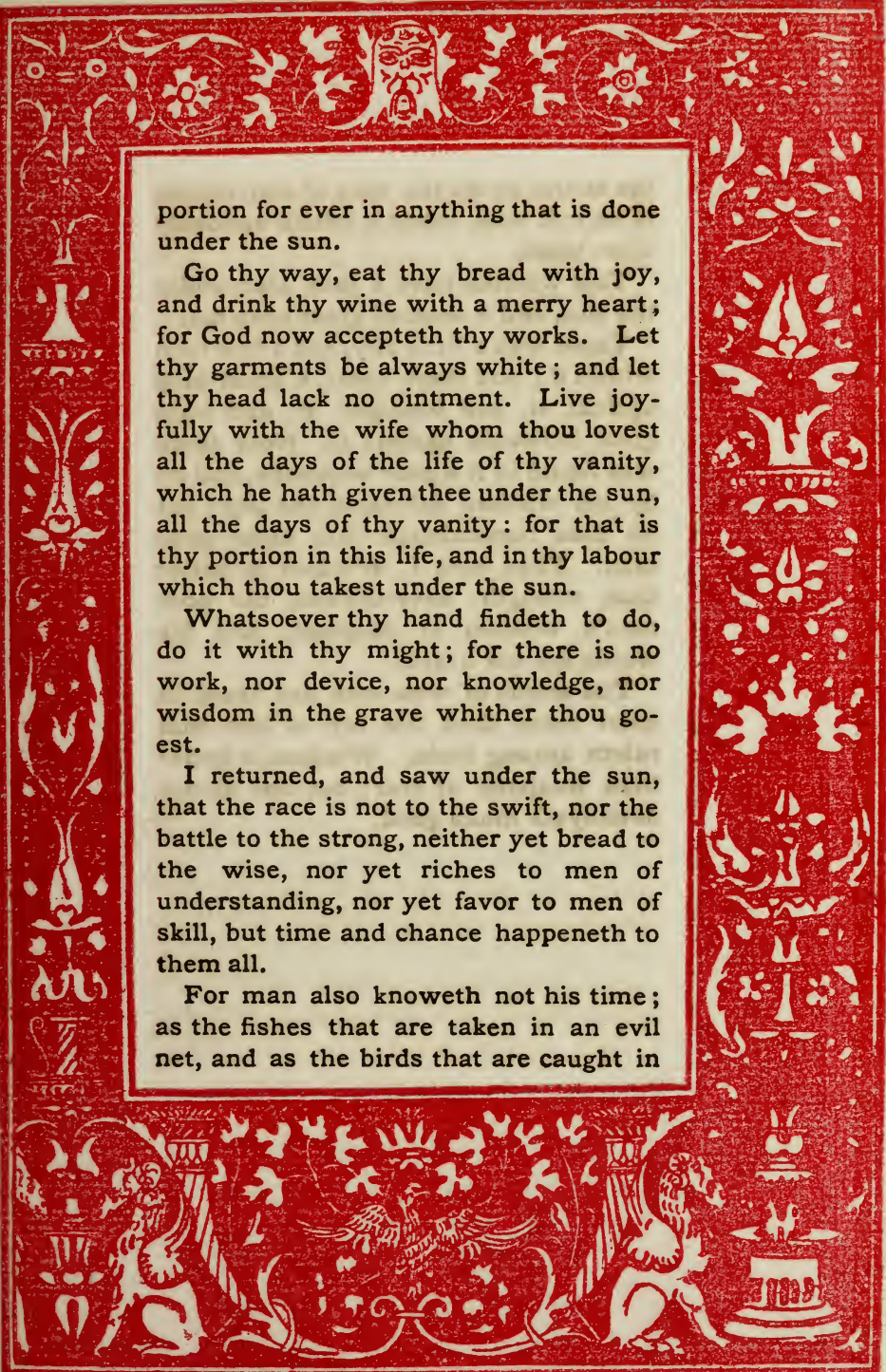


FOR ALL this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them.

All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not. As is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.

This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all. Yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope. For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished, neither have they any more a



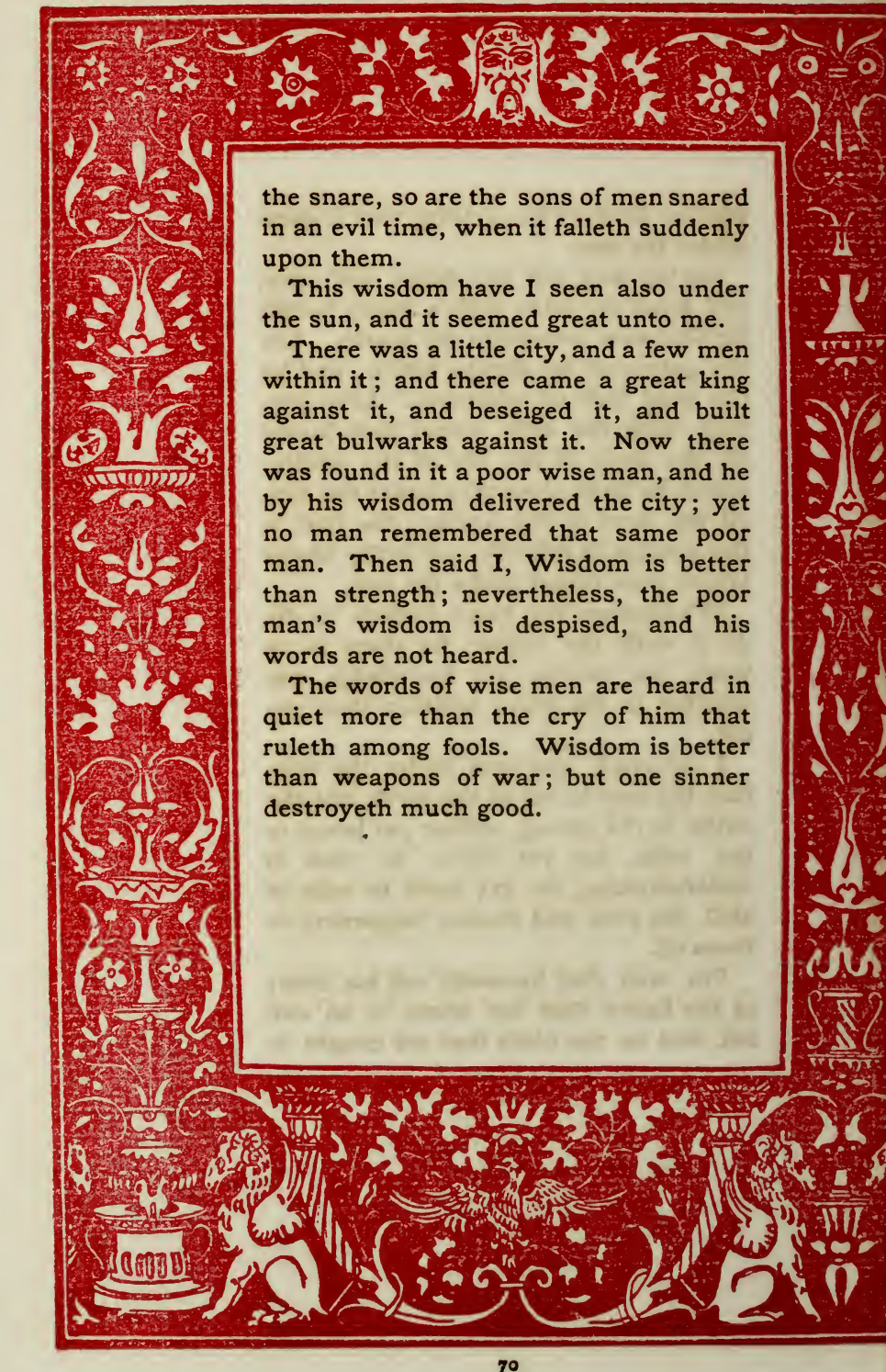
portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun.

Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all.

For man also knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in

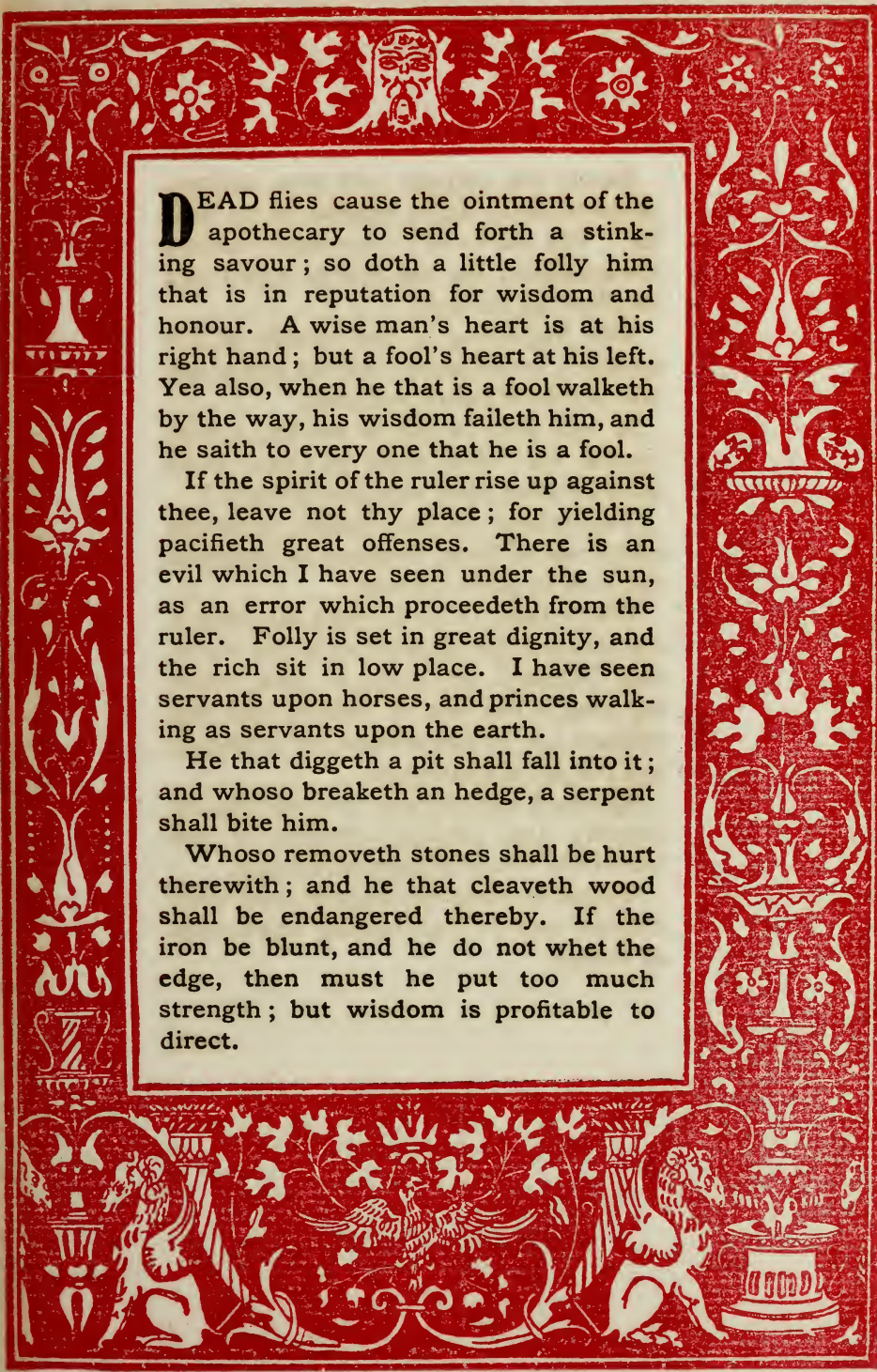


the snare, so are the sons of men snared
in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly
upon them.

This wisdom have I seen also under
the sun, and it seemed great unto me.

There was a little city, and a few men
within it; and there came a great king
against it, and beseiged it, and built
great bulwarks against it. Now there
was found in it a poor wise man, and he
by his wisdom delivered the city; yet
no man remembered that same poor
man. Then said I, Wisdom is better
than strength; nevertheless, the poor
man's wisdom is despised, and his
words are not heard.

The words of wise men are heard in
quiet more than the cry of him that
ruleth among fools. Wisdom is better
than weapons of war; but one sinner
destroyeth much good.

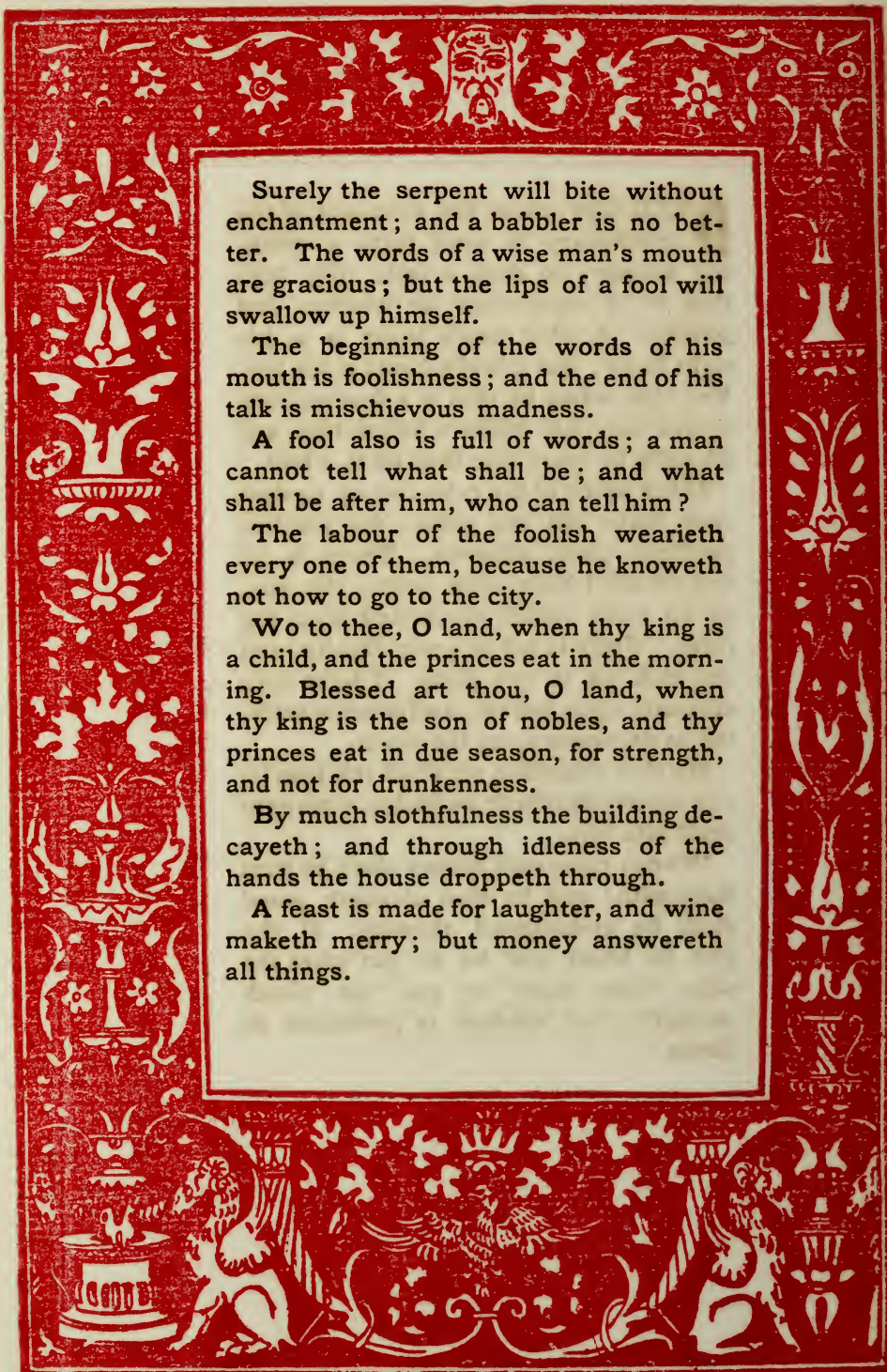


DEAD flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour. A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left. Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.

If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offenses. There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler. Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place. I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.

He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.

Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby. If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put too much strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct.



Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better. The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness; and the end of his talk is mischievous madness.

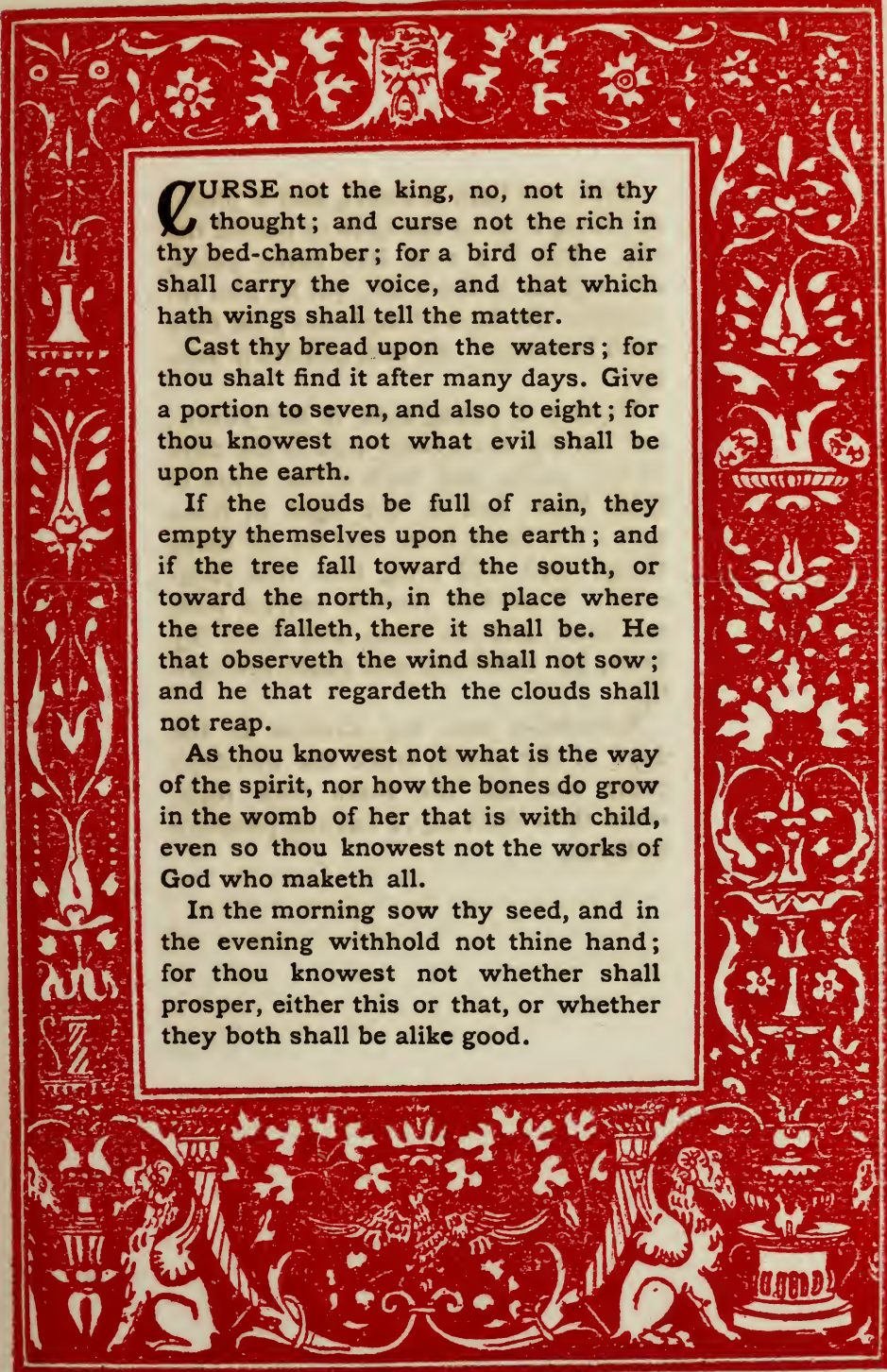
A fool also is full of words; a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him?

The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.

Wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and the princes eat in the morning. Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness.

By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry; but money answereth all things.



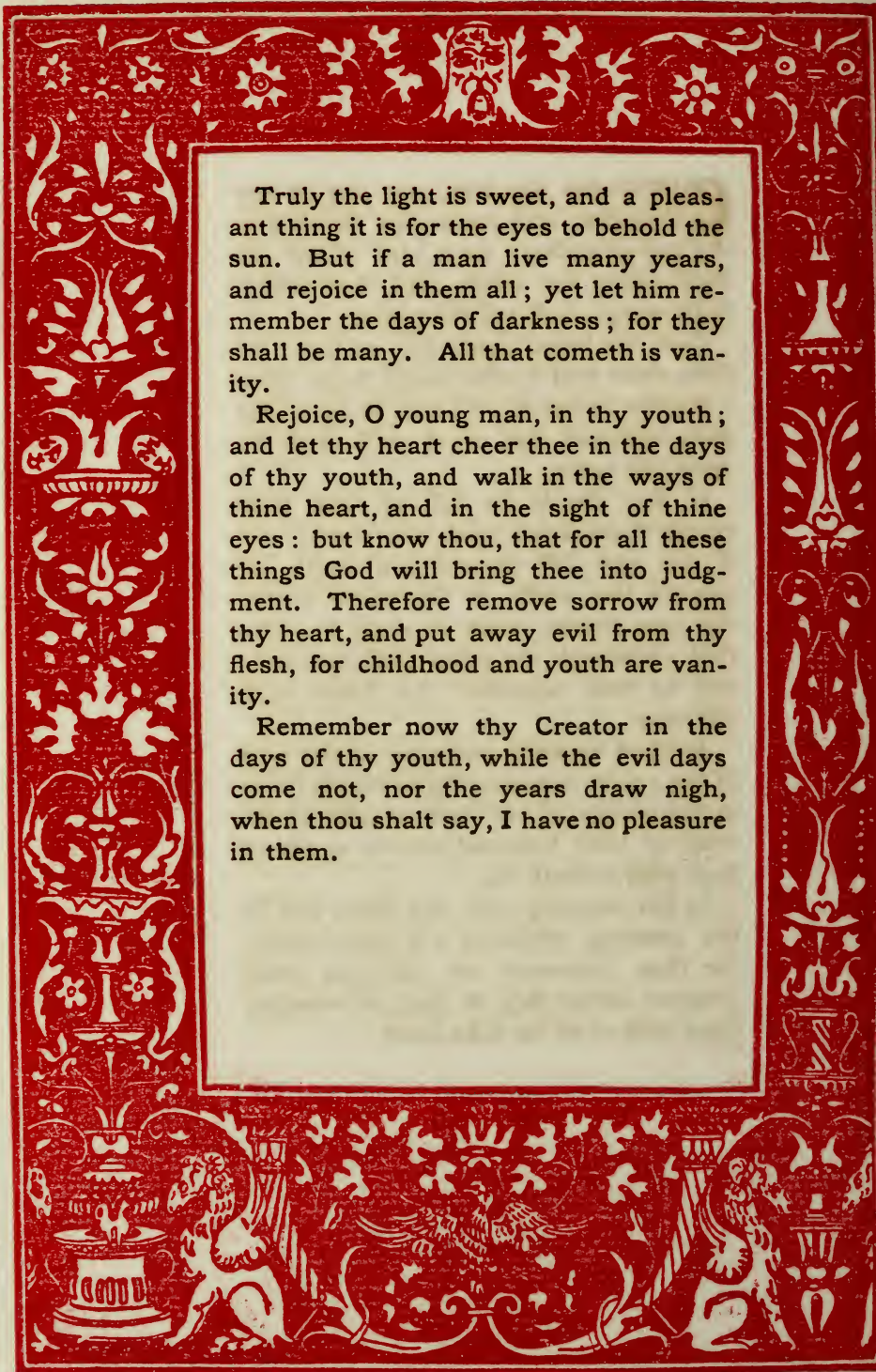
CURSE not the king, no, not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

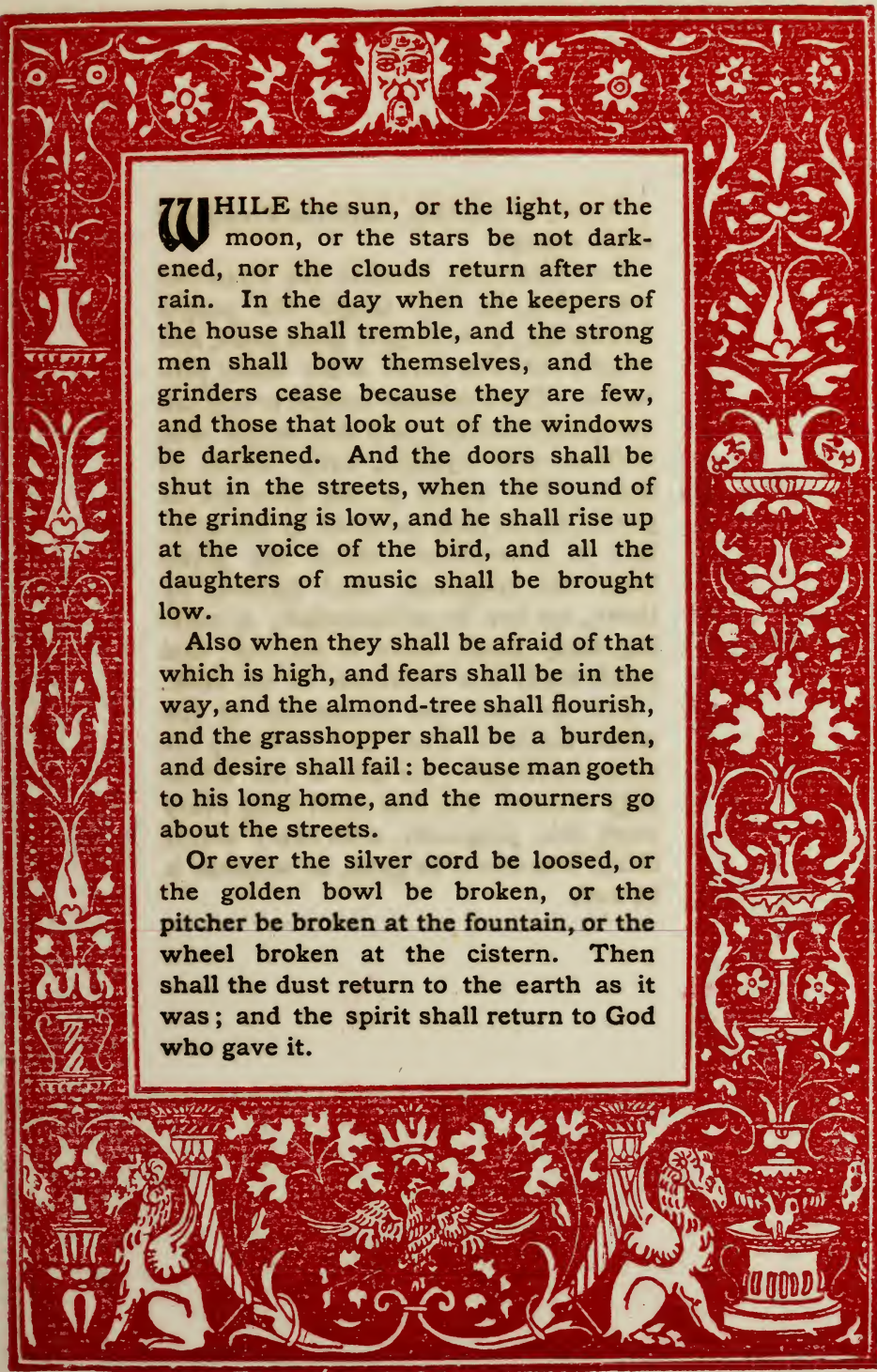
In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

The page is framed by a wide, ornate red border. The border is decorated with intricate white patterns, including stylized flowers, leaves, and heraldic symbols. At the top center is a circular medallion containing a face. The bottom of the border features a large, detailed illustration of a griffin or dragon-like creature on the left, a central eagle with spread wings, and another griffin on the right. The text is contained within a white rectangular area in the center of the page.

Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. But if a man live many years, and rejoyce in them all ; yet let him remember the days of darkness ; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.

Rejoyce, O young man, in thy youth ; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes : but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity.

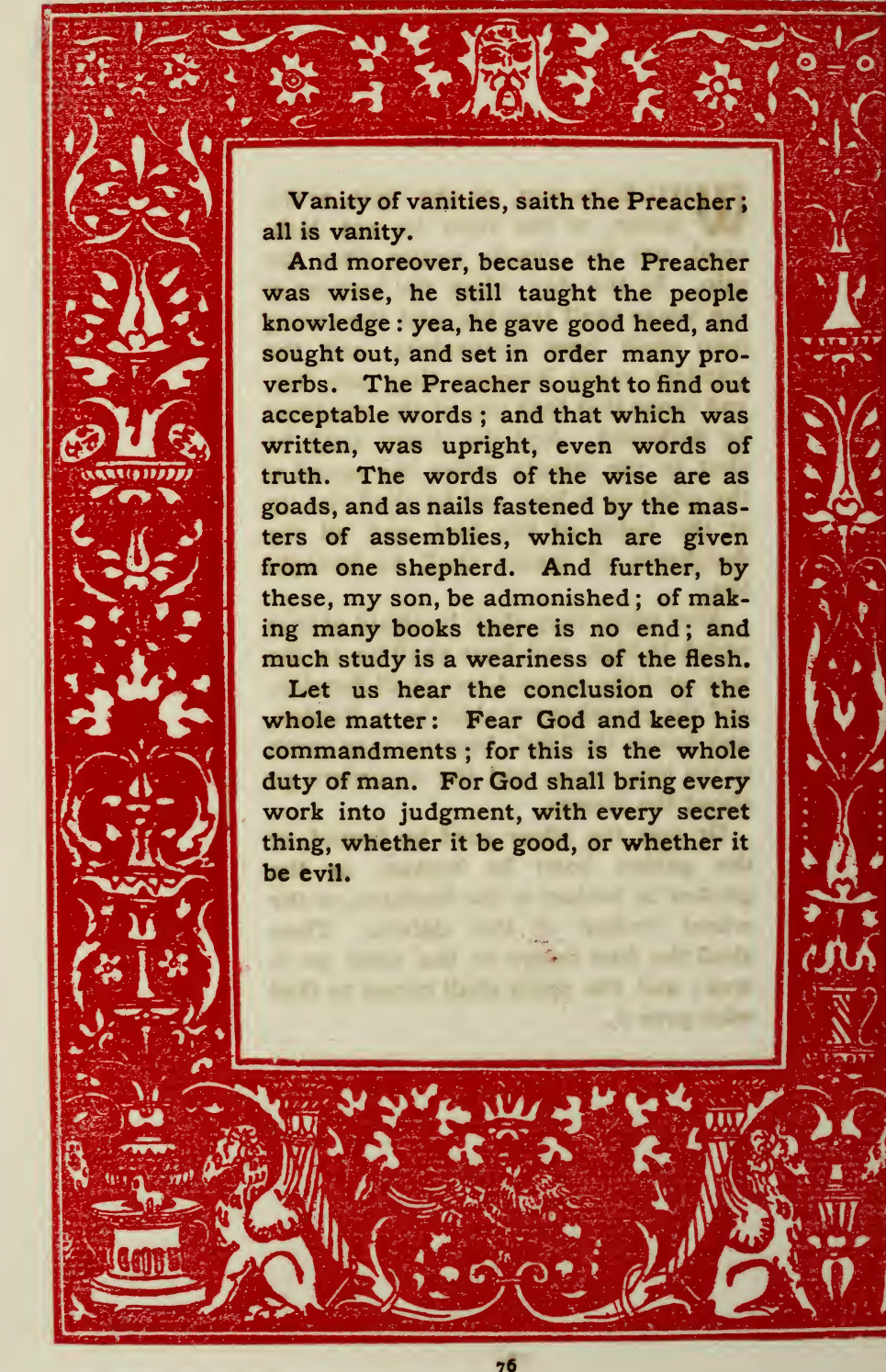
Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.



WHILE the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain. In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened. And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low.

Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail : because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was ; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.



Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher ;
all is vanity.

And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge : yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words ; and that which was written, was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished ; of making many books there is no end ; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : Fear God and keep his commandments ; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.



HERE THEN ENDETH THIS INCOM-
PARABLE VOLUME: BEING A RE-
PRINT OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIA-
STES, WITH A STUDY BY ELBERT
HUBBARD. DONE AFTER THE MAN-
NER OF THE EARLY VENETIAN AT
THE ROYCROFT PRINTING SHOP,
WHICH IS IN EAST AURORA, NEW
YORK, U. S. A., AND FIRST OFFERED
TO THE DISCERNING PUBLICK ON
MAY THE SECOND DAY, MDCCCXCVI.



